

The Books of 1 & 2 Kings

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(1989–1991 Study)

The following notes on the Books of 1 and 2 Kings were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1989-1991. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE BOOK OF 1 KINGS

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1989-1990)

1 Kings 1:1 Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

1 Kings 1:2 Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat.

1 Kings 1:3 So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

1 Kings 1:4 And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

King David was “old and stricken in years” and quite feeble. His coldness must have been visibly apparent to those in his household, probably causing him to have shakes and tremors.

Q: Why wasn't one of David's wives selected to keep him warm? One who loved him and was in good health would want to care for him.

A: Possibly the young woman was warmer-blooded and had more energy to help David than a current wife. At any rate, “the king knew her not,” so there was no sexual intimacy.

Q: Why, in some Bibles, are 1 and 2 Kings called the third and fourth books of Kings?

A: The Books of 1 and 2 Samuel are generally designated 1 and 2 Kings in the Hebrew Bible. Then the Books of 1 and 2 Kings are called 3 and 4 Kings, for a total of four books of Kings.

1 Kings 1:5 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

1 Kings 1:6 And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom.

1 Kings 1:7 And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him.

1 Kings 1:8 But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah.

Adonijah, a son of David who was born in Hebron, exalted himself, saying, “I will be king,” and prepared to usurp the throne. Earlier Absalom, of a different mother, had acted similarly. Absalom was the third son of David, and Adonijah was the fourth (see 2 Sam. 3:2-4). Adonijah appointed 50 men to run ahead of his chariots, thus creating an impressive spectacle when he went from city to city. Moreover, like Absalom, Adonijah was a “very goodly [handsome] man.” Adonijah probably considered himself next in line to ascend the throne, but David did not have him in mind—and neither did the Lord. David had never provoked Adonijah to give cause for this rebellion. As intelligent as David was, he was naive in certain ways.

Adonijah conferred with Joab, the influential general of the army, and Abiathar, one of the two high priests. Before too precipitously taking this honor to himself, Adonijah wanted to make sure some of the leading men in the realm were on his side. Both Joab and Abiathar, who should have known better, agreed to help him. Joab fluctuated in his loyalties to David. Earlier he had shown an inclination to favor Absalom, and now he sided with Adonijah.

Meanwhile, Zadok, the other high priest, remained loyal to David along with Benaiah, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and the “mighty men” (2 Sam. 23:8-39). Shimei, who had opposed David earlier, now sided with him. His favorable support in David’s feeble years, as well as his recognition of David after Absalom’s death, helped to offset what Shimei had done previously (2 Sam. 16:5-13; 19:16-20).

1 Kings 1:9 And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zohelath, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah the king’s servants:

1 Kings 1:10 But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

1 Kings 1:11 Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not?

1 Kings 1:12 Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.

En-rogel was at the southern extremity of Jerusalem where the Hinnom, Kidron, and Tyropoeon valleys form the Hebrew letter “S.” The stone of Zohelath was probably being used as an altar to sacrifice sheep, oxen, and cattle. With the exception of Solomon, Adonijah called all of his brothers, the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah to a feast.

Realizing what was happening, Nathan the prophet acted quickly, for if Adonijah successfully assumed the reins of authority, he would want to eliminate Solomon and probably Bathsheba too in order to consolidate his power. Since David was more or less bedridden at this time, he was not active and alert and observing what was taking place. Nathan offered to give advice to Bathsheba to save her life and that of her son.

1 Kings 1:13 Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign?

1 Kings 1:14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

1 Kings 1:15 And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.

1 Kings 1:16 And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou?

1 Kings 1:17 And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

1 Kings 1:18 And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not:

1 Kings 1:19 And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.

1 Kings 1:20 And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

1 Kings 1:21 Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

Nathan prompted Bathsheba with the words to speak to David. Of course she realized the necessity and the urgency of following the prophet's advice. Nathan's strategy was to enter—seemingly by chance—during Bathsheba's meeting with the king in order to confirm her words as a second witness.

When David saw Bathsheba honor him and knew she had some request to make, he asked, "What can I do for you?" She replied, "Didn't you swear to me that my son Solomon would reign after your decease? Now Adonijah is reigning, and you are unaware of his usurpation behind your back. What do you plan to do about the matter? Adonijah is even having a feast with notable men in attendance. Your prior servants have participated in the conspiracy." Bathsheba reminded David that she and Solomon would be slain if Adonijah succeeded.

1 Kings 1:22 And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

1 Kings 1:23 And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

1 Kings 1:24 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?

1 Kings 1:25 For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah.

1 Kings 1:26 But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called.

1 Kings 1:27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not showed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

Being careful not to mention Solomon at the start of his audience with the king, but to vary his account from that of Bathsheba, Nathan asked the question "Did you appoint Adonijah to be your successor?" Then, to be convincing, he added the additional details that Adonijah and his supporters had actually made the proclamation "God save king Adonijah." By calling Solomon David's "servant," Nathan was saying that all of the king's other sons were with Adonijah, but he and Solomon were faithful: "But me, even me thy servant, and ... thy servant Solomon." He added, "Haven't you let me, your servant, know who your successor is? Have you done something without informing me? Is Adonijah reigning by your authority?"

By rebelling and presumptuously seizing the kingship, Adonijah manifested a lack of faith in God. He did not have the proper respect and reverence for God and acted more out of politics and strategy based on an ulterior motive.

1 Kings 1:28 Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

1 Kings 1:29 And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

1 Kings 1:30 Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

1 Kings 1:31 Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

1 Kings 1:32 And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

1 Kings 1:33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon:

When Bathsheba had her audience with the king, she was alone with him, relatively speaking. As soon as Nathan came in, she exited. The prophet spoke to David, and then he also left. What was David's reaction? He said, "Call Bathsheba," and had a second audience with her, repeating his earlier oath that Solomon would be his successor. Next he called Nathan to return, along with Zadok and Benaiah this time. To the three, he said, "Take my servants and cause Solomon, my son, to ride upon my mule, and bring him down to the Pool of Gihon for the anointing ceremony." It was important that both Nathan and Zadok be involved with anointing Solomon to be king. There needed to be a double anointing, as it were, one by the priest and one by the prophet.

Comment: David's humility is seen here. He readily relinquished the crown to Solomon and offered his own mule.

Reply: Yes, he saw the urgency of the matter. The anointing had to be done that very day. His mule was probably a very select animal that was white and had certain features marking it as belonging to the king.

Incidentally, the Virgins Fount circular pool, the Pool of Gihon, was the same waterway as the Pool of Siloam but at the upper end. Siloam was the rectangular pool at the bottom. The Pool of Gihon was near where Hezekiah's Tunnel starts at the upper, or north end.

Comment: When Solomon's Temple was built, underpriests served in the 24 courses of service set forth by David.

Reply: Yes. Abiathar's support of Adonijah will bar him from service in the future Ezekiel's Temple. Because of Zadok's faithfulness and loyalty to David, he and his children will be the underpriests for the ceremonies in the Kingdom.

1 Kings 1:34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.

1 Kings 1:35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

1 Kings 1:36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so too.

1 Kings 1:37 As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

1 Kings 1:38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

A company of people went with Solomon, who rode David's mule down to the Pool of Gihon for his anointing. Following the anointing and the blowing of the trumpet, a proclamation was to be made: "God save King Solomon."

Q: Who were the Cherethites and the Pelethites?

A: They were foreigners who had cast their lot with David when he was in hiding from Saul. Now they were like the king's household guard in one sense, whereas the "mighty men" were his chief fighters.

1 Kings 1:39 And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

1 Kings 1:40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

The acoustics were particularly keen at the time of Solomon's anointing so that the sound wafted down to where Adonijah was. The "earth [was] rent with the sound" of the trumpet, the shout, people piping with pipes, and the rejoicing. The shout of Solomon's enthusiastic supporters was amplified by the Lord to reach Adonijah's ears. Imagine the shock and dismay that came upon him when he heard the noise!

1 Kings 1:41 And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?

1 Kings 1:42 And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

1 Kings 1:43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.

1 Kings 1:44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule:

1 Kings 1:45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that

ye have heard.

Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, reported the startling news of what had happened. Many of those with Adonijah had served under David, but they had now transferred their allegiance. Looking to the future, they threw their support to Adonijah—without first consulting the Lord.

Comment: In Bible chronology, David’s reign is reckoned as 40 years.

Reply: In reading the account carefully, we see that his reign actually lasted 40 1/2 years, but it was considered 40 years. In the chronology listings in Kings and Chronicles, the reigns are invariably rounded off and reckoned as full years. Only in rare cases are months mentioned, and that is where kings reigned for only a few months, Jehoiachin being an example (2 Kings 24:8). Had David reigned a little longer, the time would have been considered as 41 years. For the sake of the type, therefore, his reign had to be cut short.

1 Kings 1:46 And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

1 Kings 1:47 And moreover the king’s servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed.

1 Kings 1:48 And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.

1 Kings 1:49 And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

1 Kings 1:50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

Adonijah and his supporters had just finished eating when they heard the trumpet and “uproar.” Then in came Jonathan with the news. In fear, all of Adonijah’s supporters forsook him, “every man [going] his [own] way.” Knowing his attempt to seize the throne had failed, he fled to the altar in the court of the Tabernacle and caught hold of the horns with his hands. The altar was like the tribunal of last resort, for holding onto the horns was a symbol of expecting clemency and mercy from the king.

Now, at the end of David’s reign, the tent he had erected in Jerusalem many years earlier to house the Ark was still there, as well as an altar. Through this expediency, the feasts could be observed until the Temple was built.

1 Kings 1:51 And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me today that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

1 Kings 1:52 And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

1 Kings 1:53 So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

Solomon said Adonijah could live if he showed himself a worthy man. Adonijah returned to his house as Solomon commanded.

Here was a peculiar situation with three personalities on the scene at the same time: Adonijah was illegally anointed as king, Solomon was legally anointed as king, and David was still on the scene in the flesh. In antitype, Jesus was anointed King at the beginning of the Gospel Age, and the Church has been down here in the flesh throughout the Gospel Age. Stated another way, while the David class is in the flesh, the Head of the Solomon class has already been anointed.

The account is now coming to the end of David's life when "Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom" (verse 46). Not only did Solomon have David's mule going to and from the Pool of Gihon, but David's advice was, "Have him sit on my throne" (verse 35). Solomon literally sat on the seat that David customarily used on occasions of state, the point being to seal before the minds of the public that he was the successor. However, it was not until David's death that Solomon was king in the full sense of the word. Bathsheba had used that very reasoning with David: "Don't you know that as soon as you fall asleep in death, Adonijah will slay Solomon and me?" (verse 21). Thus the successor had been appointed and was there, but the reign aspect would not begin until the death of David himself.

Q: What happened to Abiathar?

A: King Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being high priest (1 Kings 2:26,27).

In the United States, if the President had to undergo serious surgery and was incapacitated, someone would temporarily take over the reins of government until he had recovered. Similarly, Solomon now handled the affairs that David was incapable of doing. Because of his infirmity, David was more in the role of adviser, as is seen in the Chronicles account.

1 Kings 2:1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

1 Kings 2:2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man;

1 Kings 2:3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

1 Kings 2:4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

1 Kings 2:5 Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.

1 Kings 2:6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

1 Kings 2:7 But show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

1 Kings 2:8 And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of

Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

1 Kings 2:9 Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

Verses 2-9 are David's charge to Solomon just before his decease. The "if" clause spoken by David in verse 4, "*If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee ... a man on the throne of Israel,*" was a *conditional* promise. In contradistinction, the "sure mercies of David" were *unconditional*. If Solomon was unfaithful, Messiah's lineage would be reckoned through someone else. And that is what happened—the true blood lineage of Mary went through Nathan (Luke 3:31).

Verse 8 confirms that this is the same Shimei who had cursed David earlier. David showed kindness to him because of later actions of reconciliation. However, now that David was about to pass off the scene, he felt that Shimei was not to be held guiltless. Because he had dishonored the office of king, the representation of Jehovah's throne, he was worthy of death. Notice that David could discern wisdom in Solomon: "thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him." He was confident Solomon would know how to handle the matter. Likewise David charged Solomon to put Joab to death, again referring to Solomon's wisdom: "Do therefore according to thy wisdom." David was squaring accounts with Shimei and Joab.

On a happier note, David instructed Solomon to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite by letting them eat at his table. David was appreciative of their support when he was fleeing from Absalom.

Q: It is understandable that, because of his promise, David did not order the death of Shimei, but why did he refrain from putting Joab to death?

A: There were probably personal reasons, for Joab did some unusual things.

1 Kings 2:10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

1 Kings 2:11 And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

1 Kings 2:12 Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

In round numbers, David's reign of 40 years consisted of seven years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem. He died and was buried in the City of David.

Here was another beginning, for upon David's death, "then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly." Like David, Solomon was anointed ahead of time and did not officially reign until his predecessor died.

There is a hint with David in regard to the closing of the door at the end of the age. We have suggested that a time will come when God will know the door is shut, but those on this side of the veil will not be aware of that fact. A little later it will be known that the door is shut, as shown by the reaction of the foolish virgins (Matt. 25:10).

In another picture, Abraham, because of his faithfulness, was told *in advance* about the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18:17,18). Of course Abraham's seeing the destruction from afar indicates that in the antitype, the Little Flock will view the destruction of the antitypical Sodom from heaven. The point is that Abraham had developed a crystallized character when he was given advance information. Accordingly, the Pastor used certain Scriptures to suggest the possibility that God will know when a sufficient number of feet members are on this side of the veil to complete the Little Flock, but the consecrated down here will not know. At that point in time, the door of opportunity for the high calling will be shut. When the closing of the door is realized by the consecrated still down here, all 144,000 will be on the other side of the veil. Hence there are two hypothetical "closings" of the door.

From that standpoint, the development of the Church occurs in stages. The anointing with the Holy Spirit to the high calling, which takes place at consecration, can be lost by an individual, yet his life can still be saved. For instance, when we give our all to the Lord and enter the door of the high calling, we are bona fide participants. If faithful unto death, we will receive a crown. But there may come a time when we are not the proper material; that is, we have not developed in the manner that is pleasing to the Lord, and He selects someone else without our knowing the person is a replacement.

We are speaking now about the dispensational closing of the door. When we say the door will be closed as dramatically as it was opened at Pentecost, we are referring to the visible closing, which is part of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. A voice from heaven will say, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.... [but] Blessed are they which are called [invited] unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7,9). That message says, in effect, that the door is closed. In regard to the opening of the door at Pentecost, just as God knew in advance, prior to Pentecost, that 11 apostles would be faithful and one would be lost, so the *theoretical* closing of the door, known by God in advance, will not coincide with the *practical* closing of the door.

Q: What is the hint in the account of David regarding the closing of the door? Is it the fact that Solomon did not really assume the throne until David had died?

A: Yes. The antitypical Solomon class of the future is chosen from the other side of the veil *before* the selection becomes apparent down here. (The David class is in the present life; the Solomon class is beyond the veil.) We know the time is drawing nigh for the wedding of the Bride and the Lamb, but we do not know which individuals will secure that honor. However, the identities of the 144,000 are known above. The *aged* David is significant with regard to the *feet* members. The *anointing* is one thing; being *seated in office* is another matter.

With co-reigns in the past, such as in Egypt, where a father and a son reigned at the same time, the father was accredited with the reign in spite of his infirmity, and the son, who may have been doing the bulk of the work, did not actually reign until the father died. When David was feeble in his old age, Solomon assumed the duties of his father and spoke with his father's authority. He reigned in a practical way but not in the theoretical way until David died. Thus we see three parts to the reign: two anointings of Solomon followed by his sitting on the throne of David. The wording of verse 12—"Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father"—implies there was a manner in which he previously did not sit on the throne, yet when Solomon was anointed, David said, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne *this day*, mine eyes even seeing it" (1 Kings 1:48).

1 Kings 2:13 And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.

1 Kings 2:14 He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.

1 Kings 2:15 And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD.

1 Kings 2:16 And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on.

In review, we recall that Adonijah was about to be proclaimed king when Nathan the prophet contacted Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, and informed her of the conspiracy. Then Bathsheba reminded King David of a previous promise wherein the Lord had committed the kingdom to be handed over to Solomon, and she wanted David to verify that promise to the nation before the conspiracy became full-blown. As a result, Solomon was anointed king, and David's decease occurred shortly thereafter.

Having heard the announcement that Solomon was king, Adonijah was concerned about his future and cleverly went to Bathsheba with a petition. Since David had died and her son was now king, she was highly respected as the queen mother and had great prestige. When she asked, "Do you come peaceably?" he said, "Yes." Adonijah was trying to extract a favorable response from her in advance for an unknown request.

1 Kings 2:17 And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife.

1 Kings 2:18 And Bath-sheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.

Adonijah wanted Abishag the Shunammite for his wife. Abishag was the fair, young virgin who had become King David's wife in his old age to keep him warm (1 Kings 1:1-4). Hence this was a bold, presumptuous request, and Adonijah's ulterior motive could have been that at a later date under more favorable circumstances, he might try to lead a coup to overthrow the government. Of course he was the son of a former king, and if he married one of his father's wives, he would have sort of a legitimate right to the throne. Adonijah gave Bathsheba the words to speak to King Solomon in regard to this request.

Comment: How clever of Adonijah to go to the unsuspecting Bathsheba!

Reply: Yes, if he had gone to Solomon direct, the king would have seen through his strategy right away. Adonijah hoped the more subtle approach through Bathsheba would be effective.

1 Kings 2:19 Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.

1 Kings 2:20 Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay.

1 Kings 2:21 And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.

1 Kings 2:22 And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.

1 Kings 2:23 Then king Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.

Solomon saw through Adonijah's indirect request immediately, even though it was done through Bathsheba, who asked "one small petition." Adonijah's life had been graciously spared after his rebellion and attempt to become king, and now his treachery was seen to be still alive. (As stated in 1 Kings 1:50-52, Adonijah had caught hold of the horns of the altar and pleaded to Solomon for his life. Solomon said he would live if he proved worthy.) Moreover, Abiathar and Joab had sided with Adonijah at the time of his rebellion.

Solomon was justifiably angry. "Ask for him the kingdom also," he told his mother. In other words, "Adonijah might just as well have asked for the kingdom, for that is his real intention. He is my older brother."

Comment: Solomon had promised Bathsheba he would agree to her request—"I will not say thee nay"—but when he saw it was not really her request but Adonijah's, he could renege on the promise.

Reply: The lesson is that it is dangerous to sign a contract without first reading the contents.

1 Kings 2:24 Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

1 Kings 2:25 And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

Solomon pronounced Adonijah's death sentence, and acting on orders, Benaiah killed him.

Q: Would there be an antitype when the Kingdom is established? If so, would the deaths of individuals such as Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei represent the elimination of God's enemies at that time?

A: Their deaths are not necessarily a type in that sense. However, Egypt will be brought into subjection in that day, and God will rebuke strong nations afar off (Zech. 14:18,19; Micah 4:3). Those who act precipitously through blind prejudice will need to be corrected, and those who do not listen to "that prophet" will be cut off, some summarily (Acts 3:23). Thus *in principle*, Adonijah's death would apply to the Kingdom, for some will be so *hardened* in their prejudices that even though it is the Kingdom of *light*, they will disobey. It is helpful to consider what happened with the Israelites who left Egypt in the Exodus. They *all* witnessed the miracles of the plagues, the Red Sea crossing, manna and water being supplied, etc., but *not all* the people were sweetly in harmony with Moses' instructions. Just because the truth is known in the Kingdom does not mean all will automatically respond. Some will firmly resist, and some will ostensibly obey through prudence but not with their heart. Sooner or later both classes will be weeded out.

The number of those who are deceived and perish at the end of the Kingdom will be as the "sand of the sea" (Rev. 20:8). Satan will be loosed at that time, that is, after all the Kingdom work has been done. We are inclined to think that in the final analysis, about one half of the world's population will not get life. Some will die almost immediately, some after 100 years because of insufficient progress, and some in the Little Season for not being in heart sympathy with God. In addition, it is likely that one half of the consecrated prior to the Kingdom Age will not get life, as shown by the Nadab and Abihu picture, among other Scriptures.

1 Kings 2:26 And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

1 Kings 2:27 So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

The counterpart of *unfaithful* Abiathar in the days of David was *faithful* Zadok. Evidently, Solomon made a search of things that were going on behind the scenes in order to root out future problems. Even though Abiathar had been a *high priest*, he was ousted from the priesthood and banished to his own area of Anathoth. Although Solomon did not put him to death at this time, the demotion would have brought shame and humiliation to Abiathar.

We are reminded of a prophecy of Eli, the high priest, in regard to his two willfully disobedient sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in the days when the Tabernacle was in Shiloh. "Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever" (1 Sam. 2:31-35). The house of Eli would be cut off eventually, and many evils would afflict his posterity. When Eli heard this prophecy, his heart was grieved, for it meant that his own posterity would be cut off in death. In addition, God's dealings were transferred to another family, that is, to Samuel as the successor.

Q: Why does 1 Kings 4:4, a *later* chapter, call Abiathar and Zadok "the priests" when the account here in 1 Kings 2:26,27 tells that Abiathar was demoted?

A: Abiathar was high priest for a while, and 1 Kings 4:4 is just a historical listing. The Kings account goes back and forth several times; that is, it is not in chronological sequence in all instances, for several perspectives are separately treated.

1 Kings 2:28 Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

1 Kings 2:29 And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.

1 Kings 2:30 And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.

1 Kings 2:31 And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.

Benaiah was also commissioned by Solomon to put Joab to death. (Joab, David's general of the army, had sided with Adonijah.) When Joab heard of the commission, he fled to the Tabernacle and took hold of the horns of the altar. Such protection was intended for *innocent* people as the court of highest appeal. If one could not get satisfaction from the king, the Sanhedrin, etc., he could plead his case with God. But Solomon knew Joab was *guilty*, so he could give the order for Joab's slaying there at the altar. Possibly this is a picture of the Kingdom, for at that time, one will not be able to *pretend* to be innocent.

Comment: The principle of slaying a guilty one at the altar is stated in Exodus 21:14, "But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die."

Reply: In other words, while the altar is the court of highest appeal, the appeal is not always granted. If it can be shown that the party is definitely guilty, then his holding onto the horns of the altar should be ignored. However, Benaiah correctly thought twice before slaying Joab in the sacred precincts of the court of the Tabernacle, for he went back to King Solomon and repeated Joab's words. Then Solomon reissued the commission: "Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father."

1 Kings 2:32 And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah.

1 Kings 2:33 Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.

1 Kings 2:34 So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

David had given instruction to Solomon to treat Joab with wisdom and not to let "his hoar head go down to the grave in peace" (1 Kings 2:5,6). With treachery, Joab had slain two men, Abner and Amasa, who were more noble than he, and he had also slain Absalom when, contrary to David's order, he was found hanging by his hair in a tree (2 Sam. 3:26,27; 18:9-14; 20:9,10). Joab's wrongdoing was piling up, but his siding with Adonijah was the last straw.

Of course Joab did some good things too, such as capturing Jerusalem from the Jebusites by climbing up a well with a rope, but his character changed. He got high-minded because of his popularity before the nation as the captain of the army. In the insurrection of Absalom, Joab was faithful to David, but when it came to the more recent insurrection of Adonijah, he defected. Sometimes the nicest characters can change for the worse if they do not properly respond to the Lord's providence. One misdeed leads to another, and as the misdeeds become habit-forming, a person's character gets worse and worse, generally speaking, unless he really examines his heart and repents.

Now, at Solomon's order, Benaiah slew Joab. Joab had shed innocent blood, so his death was retribution. There comes a time when mercy ends—and patience too.

David pictures the Messiah as a man of war, and Solomon represents the Messiah as the King of peace in the Kingdom. As has been suggested, if Solomon's actions are a picture of the beginning of the Kingdom, this putting to death would represent the removal of those not

capable of leadership positions in order to start with a clean slate. Being able to read the heart, Jesus will give proper judgment according to the will of his Father.

1 Kings 2:35 And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

At Solomon's instruction, Benaiah replaced Joab as the general of the army. Moreover, Zadok became the only high priest because Abiathar had been removed. Zadok was faithful.

1 Kings 2:36 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.

1 Kings 2:37 For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

1 Kings 2:38 And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

1 Kings 2:39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath.

1 Kings 2:40 And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath.

1 Kings 2:41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.

1 Kings 2:42 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good.

1 Kings 2:43 Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?

1 Kings 2:44 The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head;

1 Kings 2:45 And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

1 Kings 2:46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

Benaiah was now ordered to slay Shimei. This order, given by King Solomon, was righteous. It was just retribution, for years earlier Shimei had cursed King David and thrown stones at him (2 Sam. 16:5-14). Later, when Shimei saw that David was triumphant over Absalom, he was the first to acknowledge the king (2 Sam. 19:16-23). Shimei's support was crucial and very helpful to David at that time, so David forgave him for his previous actions. Hence with both Shimei and Joab, mercy had been shown, but when they disobeyed again, it was time for punishment.

Shimei's disobedience revealed that Solomon could not trust him. (One who is given to treachery is not necessarily cured by coming over to another person's side.) If Shimei had stayed confined in his house in Jerusalem (as instructed and as agreed to by an oath), his life would have been spared, for there Solomon could keep an eye on him. But now Shimei was not to be trusted.

Shimei's disobedience showed a lack of respect for the king (and for God). After only three years, he disobeyed the order to stay in his house in Jerusalem. In spite of this liberty in the capital city, he broke his oath. Therefore, Solomon was justified in ordering his death. Mercy was twice shown to Shimei, but mercy reached an end. The same is true with the subject of love today among Christians. A distinction has to be made between grave sins like adultery and sins of lesser import, such as a little dig or an oversight, for example.

And so in the Kingdom, those who disregard certain restrictions will be cut off in Second Death. Those individuals might be very nice people otherwise, but *simple obedience* is important.

Comment: Since, in the final analysis, Joab, Adonijah, Shimei, and Abiathar were unrepentant enemies of David, who pictures the Church in the flesh, perhaps their being slain shows Kingdom retribution (Second Death, the loss of life) at the hands of The Christ, the antitypical Solomon and the body members.

There is a spiritual lesson with the cities of refuge that is somewhat related to Shimei's leaving his house in Jerusalem. When an accidental death occurred, the Israelite could flee to a city of refuge, where he was protected from revenge on the part of a family member of the deceased. However, if the slayer left the city of refuge, he was in great jeopardy, for he was no longer guaranteed safety. Incidentally, when a trial was held after the facts were gathered, the individual who fled to the city of refuge was brought back, under conditions of safe conduct, to the local area where the crime had been committed. If the slaying was found to be accidental, the slayer returned to the city of refuge, and as long as he stayed there, he was safe.

A condition today is comparable in the antitype; namely, those who forsake Christ and the robe of Christ's righteousness do not get a second opportunity. Of course for those who fail but subsequently show real remorse and a change of life, there is the possibility of reconciliation and a return to favor. However, in other cases, restoration to favor does not apply. Accordingly, the Scriptures say there is "a sin unto death," and we are not to pray for an individual who has committed such a sin (1 John 5:16). Unfortunately, the great majority of Christians do not know what constitutes a sin unto death. It is where a person puts off the robe of Christ's righteousness in one of several ways. In one case, for example, a consecrated individual, an elder, turned from his dedication and cursed Jehovah. As in this case, a "sin unto death" is blatant. Hence there are conditions, or circumstances, where no retrieval is possible for a person who leaves a certain area of safety.

1 Kings 3:1 And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.

Solomon married the daughter of one of the Pharaohs of Egypt and brought her to Jerusalem until he had finished building "his own house, and the house of the LORD [the Temple], and the wall of Jerusalem round about." He built in several other areas of Israel as well, so his building was extensive.

Comment: The Law specifically prohibited an Israelite king from having foreign wives or horses. "But he [the king] shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to

Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold” (Deut. 17:16,17).

Reply: Yes, and Solomon disobeyed this command by marrying a foreigner early in his reign. Moreover, the Deuteronomy text was saying, in effect, not to make an alliance with Egypt. Not only did Solomon go to Egypt, but also he married an Egyptian for political reasons; that is, he made an alliance (an “affinity”) with Pharaoh. Also, he eventually had *many* horses and even put stables in caverns underneath the Temple.

1 Kings 3:2 Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.

1 Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

Since there was no Temple yet, it was not wrong to sacrifice to Jehovah even in a high place—unless the high place was associated with false religion. However, Solomon was supposed to sacrifice in Jerusalem, and some kind of arrangement could have been made there in the interim period. The implication of verse 3 is that he could have done better in this matter: “Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: *only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.*” Solomon was commended for loving “the LORD” in his early days, but an exception was that he sacrificed in high places like the people.

1 Kings 3:4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

Solomon offered 1,000 burnt offerings in one day in the “great high place” at Gibeon. Imagine 1,000 animals being put on the altar at one time! They were prepared in an assembly-line manner, as it were. Of course the large number of offerings would have been for a special occasion.

1 Kings 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shown unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

1 Kings 3:7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

1 Kings 3:8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

Solomon’s humility, which was commendable, was reflected in his prayer. Therefore, when God found fault with him, the thought is that on the whole, Solomon was trying to do what was best, but he could have done slightly better by sacrificing in the environs of Jerusalem. Instead he chose a historic altar where sacrifices had been offered in the past.

Solomon spoke of himself as “a little child” in wisdom, saying, “I know not how to go out or

come in.” We are reminded of Saul, who was humble to start with, as manifested by his hiding and his mentioning that he was of the tribe of Benjamin (1 Sam. 9:21; 10:22). He had the potential to be a great king, but subsequently he deflected. The admonition is to “keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23). Sometimes we are properly impressed with the example of certain brethren for their earnestness and zeal in following the Lord, but when it comes to deflection in serious matters, we should not be influenced in the wrong direction, no matter how close the tie may be.

Solomon continued, “Thy servant is in the midst of ... a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.” By this time, the Israelites had multiplied greatly. Solomon’s reign is called the “Golden Age of Israel.” It was the zenith of Israel’s wealth, power, and influence, and it was peaceful, being a time without war. Under Solomon, Israel consisted of an unnumbered host and had the largest territory to date, extending up to the Euphrates River and occupying Lebanon.

Israel had an estimated population at that time of about 7 million, and it was called “a land flowing with milk and honey,” which is not true today (Exod. 3:17). Much of Israel is still desert, even though the Jews have used ingenious methods of irrigation and cultivation.

1 Kings 3:9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

1 Kings 3:10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

The combined thought of verses 5, 9, and 10 is as follows. At Gibeon, God appeared to Solomon in a dream by night and said, “Ask what I shall give you.” Solomon replied in prayer, “Give your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge so great a people?” What a marvelous request—and one that God was pleased to grant! “And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.” Solomon did not ask for technical knowledge but for the ability to give practical help and benefit to Israelites who were in dispute or in need of advice. He asked for “an understanding heart,” that is, the ability to judge righteously and give proper counsel to the people. In his early days, Solomon had acquired knowledge about animals, insects, proverbs, etc., but he wanted to be able to benefit others by his knowledge.

Comment: James 1:5 is advice for the Christian: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

Reply: Yes, we should pray for wisdom with faith, tenacity, purpose, and humility. And we should pray for the ability to “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). We are to “desire the sincere milk of the word” that we may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2). Then we are to go on to “strong meat,” learning to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14). When we come to the meat stage of God’s Word, we begin to understand what is right and what is wrong, and having that ability is a great help to others.

1 Kings 3:11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

God was pleased because Solomon did not ask for long life or wealth for himself, or for the life of his enemies (i.e., that they would die at his command). Instead he asked for “understanding to discern judgment.” Verse 11 shows the degree of importance that God puts on knowing, or understanding, the difference between good and evil. For example, many appreciate the

importance of love, but how would they know what love is unless they become very familiar with *God's Word* and *His principles*. Otherwise, they might use their *own thinking*. In the world and even in the Church, emotionalism is mistaken for love, whereas love is *Godlikeness*. "God is love," and the best way to become Godlike is to study His Word as best we can so that His thinking on all subjects is like second nature to us (1 John 4:8). If we think like God on all subjects, then automatically we have love, which is the sum of all graces. These statements are an oversimplification, but there is a great deal of truth in such reasoning. In summation, Solomon wanted to be a good shepherd of Israel.

1 Kings 3:12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

Comment: Some higher critics dismiss the Book of Ecclesiastes because of certain Scriptures about death and say that Solomon was a foolish old man. But verse 12 is very commendatory of Solomon in saying he was given "a wise and an understanding heart" so that none were like him either before or since. Other than when he strayed, his words were full of wisdom.

Reply: In Solomon's writings, there is an indication of some of the things he did after sinning. He repented and was remorseful, and the remorse shows up where he passed on advice to try to help others skirt the very dangers he had fallen into.

The statement about Solomon that "there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee" should be understood as pertaining to other *kings*. No other king of Israel or Judah was as wise or as wealthy as Solomon. Jesus is excepted because even though he was the King, he was not in an earthly office (Matt. 12:42).

Solomon was given the ability to discern between good and evil, but later he was beguiled through two or three different methods. He got entangled just like a fly in the web of a spider. If Solomon had avoided certain things, he would not have gotten entangled, but once he was caught, it was hard to get out of the web. In other words, once a person gets entangled, there are certain problems, even if he wants to get out. The lesson is to skirt temptations and thus be free of them—to avoid them like the plague.

Comment: A good contrast is King Saul, who started out humbly but went into disobedience and stayed there. Solomon was also humble at the beginning and then disobeyed, but later he repented and was retrieved.

Reply: Yes, both had great potential, but there was a difference between the two.

1 Kings 3:13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

Even though Solomon did not ask for riches and honor, God gave him both. We are reminded of Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Things that are *needful* according to the flesh will be provided.

1 Kings 3:14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

Here Solomon was even promised longevity of life—but conditional upon obedience. He reigned for 40 years, the same length of time that Saul and David reigned. Therefore, the implication is that if he had continued to obey, his reign would have been even longer.

1 Kings 3:15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Solomon awoke from the dream—a very real dream—that had started back in verse 5. Then he went to Jerusalem and stood before the Ark of the Covenant and offered burnt and peace offerings and made a feast to all his servants. Thus he got the thought that Jerusalem was the more propitious place to present offerings. Way back in Sinai, Moses had said that when the Lord appointed “the place” (the city) He would choose, the offerings of the Israelites were to be made there (Deut. 14:23).

1 Kings 3:16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

1 Kings 3:17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

1 Kings 3:18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

1 Kings 3:19 And this woman’s child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

1 Kings 3:20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

1 Kings 3:21 And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

1 Kings 3:22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

1 Kings 3:23 Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

1 Kings 3:24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

1 Kings 3:25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

1 Kings 3:26 Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

1 Kings 3:27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

1 Kings 3:28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

Solomon judged between two harlots, who both claimed the live baby was hers. There were no witnesses, so this was a case of one harlot's word against another's. Who could have thought of such a solution without the *Lord's* help? Solomon's judgment shows his knowledge of human nature, even of a woman's nature. He knew in advance that the real mother would not be able to stand the thought of her child being put to death and would rather see her son given to the other woman. His method of judgment not only exposed the truth but also convinced all onlookers which harlot was guilty. Certainly news of Solomon's wise judgment went throughout the realm.

Solomon manifested practical wisdom in his understanding of human nature in a way that gave practical benefit. No doubt both harlots were very excited and emotional in their remarks, and to those who listened to the debate, the situation was confusion, that is, until Solomon acted.

Incidentally, female innkeepers back there had no husbands and tended to be harlots. Rahab was probably such an innkeeper in her earlier life, that is, before she gave her heart completely to the Lord.

1 Kings 4:1 So king Solomon was king over all Israel.

1 Kings 4:2 And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest,

1 Kings 4:3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder.

1 Kings 4:4 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:

1 Kings 4:5 And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:

1 Kings 4:6 And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.

King Solomon had princes, priests, scribes (secretaries), a recorder (historian), a household chief, one in charge of taxes, etc.—a total of 11 in all. For example, a “secretary” was used if the king wanted to send a message to another king, ruler, or person.

Comment: Some of the names are familiar: Benaiah, Zadok, and Abiathar.

1 Kings 4:7 And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision.

1 Kings 4:8 And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim:

1 Kings 4:9 The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan:

1 Kings 4:10 The son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hopher:

1 Kings 4:11 The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife:

1 Kings 4:12 Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam:

1 Kings 4:13 The son of Geber, in Ramoth-gilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars:

1 Kings 4:14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim:

1 Kings 4:15 Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife:

1 Kings 4:16 Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth:

1 Kings 4:17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar:

1 Kings 4:18 Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin:

1 Kings 4:19 Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land.

Each verse tells of an officer (12 officers in all) and the location over which he had jurisdiction. The jurisdiction was usually a town or village and was occasionally a region. This listing shows that Solomon had administrative capabilities like those of his father David.

1 Kings 4:20 Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.

1 Kings 4:21 And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

1 Kings 4:22 And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,

1 Kings 4:23 Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.

1 Kings 4:24 For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him.

1 Kings 4:25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

Under Solomon's reign of peace, the Israelites were prosperous ("every man under his vine and under his fig tree") and content. There were no enemies in this "Golden Age of Israel." The land extended "from the [great] river [Euphrates] unto the land of the Philistines [down to the Gaza border, or the wadi El Arish]." Solomon "had dominion ... over all the kings on this side the river." This thumbnail delineation of the size of the land gives the conditions that existed

within Israel proper.

Q: Did “Solomon’s provision for one day” serve his entire household?

A: Yes, including his servants. The account shows how much was consumed. The land was extensive, and the revenues collected provided Solomon with ample riches. (Because he had sought an understanding heart, God gave him riches and honor as well.)

In one day, Solomon’s household consumed 30 measures of fine flour, 60 measures of meal, 10 fat oxen, 20 oxen from the field, and 100 sheep, “beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.” When these quantities are multiplied by 360 days in a lunar year, we get some idea of what Solomon’s income was along these lines and what was consumed. He was also in a position to provide for others if he so chose.

Q: Israel had extensive borders that went from the Euphrates down to the border of Egypt, but verse 25 says that “Judah and Israel dwelt safely ... from Dan even to Beer-sheba.” Is the thought that the 12 tribes basically stayed in their allotted territories and that other peoples lived in the additional land?

A: As we read further, we will find out a little more about the circumstances. For example, there were foreigners in Lebanon at that time. The greater part of Solomon’s kingdom was under his control and jurisdiction through alliances. The nucleus of the nation went from the area of Mount Hermon down to the desert area of Beer-sheba.

1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

1 Kings 4:27 And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon’s table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.

1 Kings 4:28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.

Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots and 12,000 horsemen. There were stalls at Megiddo and Hebron and in other places way up north, plus underneath the Temple.

Comment: Solomon really got carried away, for he was not supposed to have any horses according to the Law.

Reply: That is right, and with the horses came the chariots. Moreover, the horses came from Egypt, so Israel had commerce with the *world*, which was a dangerous condition. Like a boat in the ocean, the Christian has to be in the world, but the ocean must be kept out of the boat.

Each chariot had from two to four horses depending on the type of chariot, what it was used for, and the terrain. Solomon had the chariots to fortify Israel with secure borders.

1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

1 Kings 4:30 And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

1 Kings 4:31 For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and

Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

1 Kings 4:32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

1 Kings 4:33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

1 Kings 4:34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

Verses 29-34 furnish amazing information, yet secular history ignores King Solomon. Time periods, borders, cities, names, etc., are given, whereas secular history has many loose ends and lacks detail and depth. In the Kingdom, many scientists, astronomers, and historians will hide their heads in shame for having discounted the Bible.

Comment: How wonderful that Solomon was given “largeness of heart” as well as wisdom!

Reply: Yes, he had great wisdom and understanding, “exceeding much,” plus largeness of heart, yet he went into a period of disobedience. We must guard our hearts with *all diligence*, meaning that we are to search out our motives. What happened to Solomon is scary, especially for a teacher. Entertaining wrong thoughts, involvement in harmful associations, and failing to separate under certain circumstances can cause one to deflect. Marital or family influences and ties that are intertwined can become a dangerous cable. After a while, a situation can become very entangling if one does not act in the beginning.

Comment: Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs, only a few of which are preserved in Holy Writ.

Reply: Yes, and of the 1,005 songs he wrote, we have only Song of Solomon, “the song of songs.”

Comment: Verse 30 says that “Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.” This was not spiritual wisdom but science and philosophy.

Reply: The wisdom of the wise men in the East and in Egypt was not to be compared to Solomon’s. Solomon had a natural capability and wisdom that were greatly enhanced and enlarged by the Holy Spirit.

What happened to Solomon shows how subtle the influences of deception can be. The calling to the divine nature, to immortality, is so extremely high that it is hard to make the top grade. While in searching our hearts, we may be confident of our love for the Lord, we still do not know the intensity of that love. The Heavenly Father can judge our flesh; He knows what our problems are and the extent to which we are trying to do His will. Even the Apostle Paul, who was such an example in his zeal for the Lord, said, “I judge not mine own self” (1 Cor. 4:3). With the qualifications being so high, it is hard to hear the almost blasé attitude of some in their confidence of attaining the Little Flock. The *high* calling is very real, and anyone who is called can make it—but *effort* is required. We must apply ourselves zealously and diligently and not be careless with regard to spiritual decisions.

1 Kings 5:1 And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

1 Kings 5:2 And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

1 Kings 5:3 Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

1 Kings 5:4 But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

1 Kings 5:5 And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.

1 Kings 5:6 Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

Q: Did Hiram, king of Tyre, prepare all the cedar beams for Solomon's Temple?

A: Cedar beams were used in connection with some of the walls of the Temple, paneling was done in the interior of the Holy and the Most Holy, and trees and shrubs were in the courts. Figures of cherubim were carved in the paneling for the walls. To make these convex figures, which extruded from the walls, required skilled workmanship.

Lebanon was noted for its tall cedars, which were somewhat comparable to the sequoia redwoods of California. According to their rings, some of those redwoods are several thousand years old.

Comment: With the cedars of Lebanon being aromatic like a cedar chest, it would have been pleasant to work on that kind of wood and to have it in the Temple.

God gave David the Temple plans in a dream, or vision, and in his old age, he passed them on to his son Solomon. During his reign, David collected many materials, including gold, and put them in storage for the time when the Temple would be built. At his demise, he dedicated his own fortune to the Temple work.

Solomon was concerned that the Temple work get started in accordance with the responsibility laid upon him by his father. He needed cedars from Lebanon to be transported to Israel. Knowing that Hiram was a friend, Solomon said in effect, "You set the wages, and I will pay for your servants' labors." In addition, Solomon said that the Jews did not have the skills of the Sidonians, the implication being that Tyre and Sidon had a rapport with each other. These two cities still exist on the coast of Lebanon today.

Q: What is the typical representation of David and Solomon?

A: David, as a man of war, pictures The Christ class in the flesh. Solomon represents The Christ in glory in the Kingdom era of peace.

Hiram, king of Tyre, "was ever a lover [a friend] of David." Solomon ruled over territory that extended up to the Euphrates River, which included Lebanon, but in that territory were what might be called "free cities." The same thing occurred during the rule of Rome and Greece, where some cities could be trusted to cooperate with the empire because of past valor or

service, so they were rewarded with the liberty of governing themselves and the surrounding area. In addition, they were not taxed or subject to other onerous burdens. With Hiram being a friend of David, Tyre and Sidon were free cities that were evidently exempt from taxation in that period of history.

1 Kings 5:7 And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.

1 Kings 5:8 And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

1 Kings 5:9 My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.

1 Kings 5:10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.

1 Kings 5:11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

1 Kings 5:12 And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

No matter what the friendship may have been between Hiram and David, when Solomon, a new personality, ascended to the throne, the relationship had to be cemented. Therefore, the making of a league, or treaty, was a logical step to take to continue the relationship.

Hiram's approach was factual and organized: fell the trees, trim them, float them down the river to the sea, and make rafts in the sea by tying trees together. Not only were the trees cut and shipped, but they were shipped to the port that Solomon would appoint, which was probably in the vicinity of Haifa. Once the trees arrived in the prearranged harbor, Hiram had fulfilled his responsibility, and he was entitled to the agreed-upon yearly reimbursement.

1 Kings 5:13 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

1 Kings 5:14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

1 Kings 5:15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

1 Kings 5:16 Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

1 Kings 5:17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

1 Kings 5:18 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

Verses 7-12 told what Hiram planned to do. Now verses 13-18 inform us that Solomon sent a labor crew up into Lebanon, probably to choose trees for the specific purpose he had in mind. While Hiram was glad to cooperate, he did not know the exact dimensions and needs for the construction of the Temple. Another reason for sending men to Lebanon was to speed up the work.

The materials that came into Israel consisted of both timber and stones, which were taken from various quarries in Lebanon. The laborers of both Solomon and Hiram participated in the work. We assume that Solomon's workers did some of the rough tree cutting, for he admitted that his men were not skilled in the finer art of carving the wood. Therefore, Solomon had the Sidonians come down to do the woodworking and the paneling, which required carving and finesse. With Solomon's work crews doing the rougher work, Hiram's men had more time for the finer, more detailed work. The result was that the work was accomplished more quickly.

Solomon and Hiram would have assigned superintendents for their respective work crews. Through experience, Hiram's men were probably far more skilled in felling the large trees.

Q: How were the stones transported to Israel?

A: The stones that came from Lebanon would have been transported as far as possible over water on rafts. Perhaps the very trees that were cut down acted as rafts for the stones. The stones were cut and tooled in the quarry so that when they arrived at the Temple site, not the sound of a hammer or chisel was heard. They had to be finished perfectly so that they would fit in a very pleasing manner and could be just pushed into place.

Quite a number of stones came from Lebanon, but stones came from other places as well. For example, choice marble for certain purposes was obtained from deposits elsewhere. The foundation stones came from Lebanon—"great [large] stones, costly stones." Stones of better-quality limestone came from Solomon's quarries in Jerusalem. The flooring of the Temple courts was made of what we call "tile" today, which had to be cut in squares and laid down. The flooring material, of various colors, was very beautiful.

Solomon had a labor crew of 30,000 men, who were divided into three courses. Each group of 10,000 served for one month in Lebanon and then went home for two months, so labor was constantly being done. Adoniram "was over the levy"; that is, he oversaw that the work was on schedule in both quality and quantity. With the work being done in shifts, each work crew of 10,000 worked four months a year and was home for eight months. Of course some travel time was involved in getting to and from the work site in Lebanon, so the next crew was ready to continue the work as soon as a new month began.

In addition, Solomon had 70,000 burden bearers and 80,000 hewers in the mountains. After the trees were cut down, they were rough-trimmed for transportation purposes and taken to the harbor. As the Temple was being built, specifications for specific building materials (paneling, for example) were given to an intermediate place where the lumber was planed, given a sheen, and trimmed, so that when the lumber was shipped to the Temple site, it was ready to be put in place.

1 Kings 6:1 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

Verse 1 states that Solomon began to build the Temple 480 years after the Exodus, in the fourth

year of his reign. However, the number 480 is an error and should be 580 years. Bro. Edgar and others outside the Bible Student movement have called attention to the fact that the only difference in the Hebrew characters for 480 and 580 is a little curlicue, which could easily have dropped off as time passed. It is important to keep in mind that there is no existing Hebrew manuscript with this Scripture in it earlier than around the year AD 1054. Moreover, when the Hebrew Old Testament was printed in its entirety at that time, the manuscript was not an original. Fragments of information were collected and collated in the interim from late in the fifth century, and eventually, by the eleventh century, the result was a whole Old Testament. With the passage of time, there has been some damage to the writing, whether it was on stone, papyrus, or leather. Even the Dead Sea Scrolls have some damage, but those who know the grammar can do detective work to ascertain what the word was in the original by counting the consonants.

The number 480 is a problem in the chronology. Some of the criticism within the Bible Student movement is that in the earliest presently-existing manuscripts of the Old Testament, the numbers are written in longhand, but for several reasons, that is not a valid argument for retaining 480; that is, the longhand does not disprove 580 and prove 480. It is true that if the *originals* were written in longhand, then damage to the characters would not matter too much because enough of the word could be pieced together to discern it. For instance, if English is used to simplify the reasoning, the longhand “four” and “three” look very different, but the numbers 8, 3, and 5 could be confused if some damage occurred. However, we believe that the original writing back around 100 BC was the short form. The same is true with the earlier Egyptian hieroglyphs, which are word symbols, and just one letter could mean several things, such as house, cow, or camel. But in the Middle Kingdom of Egypt, more was involved; for example, an ideogram that pertained to the name of a person included a figure of a male or a female, or used a different color to differentiate gender. The ideogram was harder to confuse even if damage occurred. The point is that the original hieroglyphs were very simple, and we believe the Hebrew was the same—that it was done in the *short form*, not longhand.

Comment: The total of 580 years is reached by adding the following time periods:

40	years (Israelites were in Sinai)
6	years (Israelites conquered the land under Joshua)
450	years (Period of the Judges)
40	years (reign of King Saul)
40	years (reign of King David)
<u>4</u>	years (reign of King Solomon)
580	years

Reply: That is correct. However, critics of the Pastor’s chronology dispute the 450 years of the Period of the Judges, as mentioned in Acts 13:20. “And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.” Claiming that the Greek was damaged, they say the Period of the Judges was only 350 years. But the problem with such reasoning is that the Greek manuscripts are *much newer* than the Hebrew manuscripts. The Old Testament Hebrew is based largely on the Septuagint, for which Greek scholars in Alexandria were commissioned to translate the Hebrew into Greek. That Greek has lasted, whereas the much older original Hebrew is gone.

In Solomon’s day, Zif was the second month of the sacred year, which began in the spring. Therefore, Zif was around May in our calendar.

1 Kings 6:2 And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

The dimensions of Solomon's Temple were as follows for the Holy and the Most Holy: 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. However, these dimensions could be misleading, for there were a lot of additions. Not only was the building in the center called the Temple proper, but even with the Temple proper, the core of the Temple and the supplementary chambers outside were two different things. Therefore, the 20-cubit breadth pertained to only the Holy and the Most Holy.

1 Kings 6:3 And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.

Of course the porch, etc., were "before the temple" because steps led up to the entrance into the Temple proper, that is, into the Holy and the Most Holy. Three stories of chambers with a lot of arches that allowed light to enter on both sides, storage rooms, etc., had nothing to do with the Temple proper. One who looked at the Temple saw a buttress formation on the sides, but actually, that formation did not go underneath the Temple proper. The foundation that held up the side buildings was completely *separate* from the foundation of the Holy and the Most Holy. To the beholder standing outside, the Temple with the side buildings appeared to be *one* structure—and hence much wider than the 20 cubits. The internal construction of the Temple proper was purposely done separately for both symbolic and practical purposes. In the antitype, the Temple proper is the Church in glory. The subsidiary (or auxiliary) buildings—storerooms, trophy rooms, treasury rooms—also contain lessons.

Q: Were the length and width dimensions of just the Temple proper *twice* the size of the Holy and the Most Holy of the Tabernacle, which was 30 cubits long and 10 cubits wide?

A: Yes. Visually, however, the Temple appeared much larger.

1 Kings 6:4 And for the house he made windows of narrow lights.

1 Kings 6:5 And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about:

1 Kings 6:6 The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

Another peculiarity is that the Holy is sometimes called the "temple." Solomon "built chambers ... against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple [the Holy] and of the oracle [the Most Holy]." When the "temple" is the Holy, the antitype would be the Temple class, that is, those who are called in the present age to be of the Temple class. Solomon's Temple was sullied—it was defiled—as was Zerubbabel's Temple, which was enlarged and is synonymous with Herod's Temple. Thus the Church class, those who are called in the present age to be kings and priests in glory, are pictured by these two buildings. However, while the inner structure of Solomon's Temple purports to be the true and glorified Church, it does not end up that way in the antitype. In the final analysis, the Lord's stamp of approval will be only on Ezekiel's Temple, for He will not allow any Canaanite to defile that structure (Zech. 14:21).

Q: Where were the narrow windows?

A: There were both an exterior house and an interior house, and the windows were in the outer complex, not in the Holy and the Most Holy. With side buildings built up against the

Temple proper, the sides of the inner structure could not be seen. (It would be like having three apartment buildings—a center apartment building and then an apartment building on each side but with no spaces in between.) Right away, as far as the length of the interior house was concerned, that meant there were no windows. And doors on the outside front of the inner building shut out all light. Moreover, there was no door on the back side. Therefore, the back of the inner house was dark, both sides were dark, and the front was blocked by doors and curtains. (The curtains were another type of embellishment that was added later.)

In summary, the narrow windows were in the outer house, and the inner house (the Temple proper) did not have any windows. With the Temple proper representing the Church in glory in the antitype, only the Zadok priesthood will be allowed to enter Ezekiel's Temple.

1 Kings 6:7 And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

1 Kings 6:8 The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third.

1 Kings 6:9 So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.

1 Kings 6:10 And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

The fact that wood and stone were intermingled in the construction shows that Solomon's Temple should not be as critically examined as Ezekiel's Temple. But Solomon's Temple gives valuable clues that are helpful in understanding some features of Ezekiel's Temple. The same is true of the Tabernacle, for some features of that structure provide clues to an understanding of the significance of Solomon's Temple, as well as of Ezekiel's Temple. Certain principles are laid down. Since the same God was the Author of all three structures, a characteristic stamp of His architecture and workmanship is seen in each one—the Tabernacle; Solomon's Temple, which was sullied; and Ezekiel's Temple of glory. God gave the dimensions of Solomon's Temple, but since He knew in advance that it would not prosper, He purposely excluded certain details in Holy Writ.

The inside of this building, toward the back of the court, was internally structured so that no part of either side building could have the inner building as its support. Stated another way, no part of either side building was supported by the inner house (the Temple proper) or its foundation. The two side buildings each had separate foundations.

There were three stories of rooms (or chambers), and the dimensions of the stories varied in width as one went up higher. The rooms were little, being five cubits high. The rooms did not occupy the whole floor, for a hallway and stairs were exposed to the outside for climbing to the next story. In the limited Hebrew vocabulary, verse 8 describes the stairways as "winding stairs," but they were actually zigzag stairs (like a fire escape on a multistory apartment building).

"There was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." What is the spiritual meaning of no sound of hammer or axe being heard in the construction of the Temple? The stones were cut and fashioned in the quarry, which pictures the earth. Christians, those who are called to be of the future spiritual Temple, are chiseled and shaped down here in the present life. Those who make their calling and election sure will be

transferred and assembled *in heaven*, but first, their character building takes place down here *on earth*. All God does in transferring Christians to the heavenly realm is to give them a new nature, not a new character. Then, with perfect minds and bodies and not having the obstacles in heaven that were down here, the crystallized characters will have plenty of room for expansion. They will have been fully approved and tested of God before they get to that point. The assemblage of the finished stones in heaven will be “quiet”; it will not be seen or heard by anyone down here.

Comment: We need to learn the *principles* down here so that if we are made perfect, we can *operate* perfectly in heaven.

The structural support of Ezekiel’s Temple will be stone. With Solomon’s Temple, the structural support was wood and stone mixed. The wood, when considered from the future standpoint, is a picture of everlasting life. There will be some wood embellishment and ornamentation in Ezekiel’s Temple, but the real structural support is stone.

Q: Do the cedars of Lebanon picture righteousness?

A: That would be primarily true in the present life. From God’s standpoint, the cedars of Lebanon represent mature Christians or mature righteous persons of the Jewish Age and earlier. Trees that bear fruit year-round will be on both banks of the river that goes down to the Dead Sea in the Kingdom. Although those trees are not described as cedars, the principle of trees being used is there. Also stone palm trees will be used frequently in Ezekiel’s Temple.

Solomon finished the Temple and covered it “with beams and boards of cedar.” This reference is mostly to the interior support beams and paneling of both the Temple proper and the side structures.

1 Kings 6:11 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

1 Kings 6:12 Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father:

1 Kings 6:13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

1 Kings 6:14 So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

1 Kings 6:15 And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling; and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

1 Kings 6:16 And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place.

1 Kings 6:17 And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long.

1 Kings 6:18 And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen.

The paneling was basically in the interior of the Temple. Figures of knops and flowers were

carved into the wood, and then probably buffed or polished for a nice finish. Gold and marble will be used in Ezekiel's Temple.

Verses 15-18 tell the disposition of the wood on the walls, ceiling, and floor. No stone could be seen in the interior. Spiritually speaking, the knops and flowers show the fruitfulness of the New Creation. Stated simply, the Christian is made good inside, not just on the exterior. There are three stages: the budding of the seed (shown by the knops), the flower, and the fruit.

1 Kings 6:19 And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

1 Kings 6:20 And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar.

1 Kings 6:21 So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold.

1 Kings 6:22 And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold.

The "oracle" was the Most Holy, the room for the Ark of the Covenant. The structure was segmented into the "temple" (the Holy) and the "oracle" (the Most Holy). The Most Holy of Solomon's Temple was *twice* the size of the Most Holy in the Tabernacle (20 x 20 x 20 cubits versus 10 x 10 x 10 cubits, respectively).

Gold was hammered over figures in certain places in the interior. The "whole house" (that is, the entire Most Holy) was overlaid with gold. The wood was overlaid with gold—it was like being covered with tinfoil. Stated another way, where gold was used, it was the outer layer. For example, the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle was made of acacia wood and then overlaid with gold, whereas the lid consisted of solid gold hammered out with two cherubim.

Incidentally, the boards of the Tabernacle were made of wood and then overlaid with gold. There were several reasons for this method. A practical reason is that the boards had to be light enough for transport when the cloud moved, and solid gold would have been too heavy. In addition, the boards were more or less hollow inside, for the wood was mortised together. In Solomon's Temple, which was a stationary building, the beams were solid.

1 Kings 6:23 And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high.

1 Kings 6:24 And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits.

1 Kings 6:25 And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size.

1 Kings 6:26 The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.

1 Kings 6:27 And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the

house.

1 Kings 6:28 And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.

“Within the oracle [the Most Holy],” there were two cherubim, “each ten cubits [15 feet] high.” The cherubim, which were made of olive wood and covered with gold, represented two of God’s attributes, specifically Love and Power, as in the Tabernacle. However, in the Tabernacle, the two cherubim were figuratively glued to the Mercy Seat in a posture that was ready to run and eager to fly. They were bent inward, looking upon the Mercy Seat for the blood of atonement to be applied.

In Solomon’s Temple, the two cherubim were in a different posture; namely, they were released and standing with wings outstretched full length. The outstretched wings of each cherub were 10 cubits (15 feet) across. Since the Most Holy was 20 cubits square, the wings of the two cherubim went from side to side, touching opposite walls and touching each other (the right wing of one cherub touched the left wing of the other cherub in the center, or middle, of the oracle). In other words, the two cherubim stood side by side, and they faced the same direction (toward the Holy).

Q: How do we know that the cherubim represent the attributes of God?

A: The cherubim support God’s throne; they uphold His chair, symbolically speaking. Certainly God does not need literal support, for He walks on clouds and on the “wings of the wind,” but He governs Himself according to His own government, principles, and character (Psa. 18:10; 104:3). Hence four cherubim, when they are presented in their fullness in other situations, represent the four basic attributes of God and His government: Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Power. These attributes uphold Him; He is guided, or governed, by them. Of the four attributes, Justice is the foundation of His throne (Psa. 89:14).

Now we can narrow down the two attributes in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. If the two cherubim are watching the Mercy Seat for the satisfaction of sin, one of them has to be Power, which cannot be released until Justice is satisfied. Justice is the *hilasterion* (Greek), or Mercy Seat, the slab upon which the blood is sprinkled (Heb. 9:5). Also, Love cannot operate in fullness toward mankind until Justice is satisfied.

However, in Solomon’s Temple, God’s Love and Power can operate because Justice has been satisfied. Therefore, Love and Power are released. Solomon’s Temple pictures the Church in glory, the finished condition. The Temple is a permanent structure in contradistinction to the Tabernacle, which was designed to be disassembled, transported, and reassembled in successive providentially selected locations. Like a pilgrim house, the Tabernacle journeyed with the Israelites until they got to the Promised Land.

God allowed Solomon’s Temple to be destroyed in 606 BC because it became sullied. In the Kingdom, Solomon’s Temple will be replaced by Ezekiel’s Temple, which will never be defiled.

With the “oracle” being the Most Holy here, the Holy is called the “temple” (1 Kings 6:5). In regard to Solomon’s Temple, the word “house” can refer to the whole Temple complex, to the Holy and the Most Holy, or just to the Most Holy.

The olive wood base, or core, of the two 15-foot-high cherubim represents the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:1-6, 11-14). Imagine looking up at these tall, imposing figures, which were more than double the height of the average man! The cherubim were made of olive wood and then overlaid with gold, representing the divine nature. Hence God’s Spirit, character, or disposition

is represented in four primary ways through four cherubim. Stated another way, when the four are considered together, they are God's Spirit, His motivating power.

1 Kings 6:29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.

All the walls were carved with “figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.” The boards were not individually carved in the sense that they had to be perfect to join together without crevices. Yes, the boards were finished, but they were dovetailed together, or mortised. They were big frames, but they fit perfectly. In the Tabernacle, each board was 27 inches wide, 15 feet (10 cubits) high, and 9 inches thick, and it was hollow for transporting. With acacia trees, it would be impossible to get boards of that size, so each board was mortised to make one frame.

Since the Temple was a permanent and stationary structure, the boards did not have to be hollow to lessen the weight for transport. Then the wood itself was carved. Before the wood was planed down for a specific length and width—that is, before the final trimming—the boards had to be quite thick in order to carve cherubim, palm trees, and flowers that would extrude. Basically, then, the carving was done first in the rough plank. Next the wood was planed to be level where the figures ended, and the figures extended out from the board. Those who carved the wood were true craftsmen. All the boards, including the carved figures, were then overlaid with gold. When finished, the room was very impressive. Palm trees are a symbol of victory. The “open flowers” were like those on the Tabernacle candlestick.

Q: In Ezekiel's Temple, two-faced cherubim and palm trees will be carved on the walls but no flowers. Were the cherubim in Solomon's Temple also two-faced?

A: Probably they were, for generally speaking, we combine the details of both structures except where they would contradict. We start with the Tabernacle and then learn additional features from Solomon's Temple, for automatically the dimensions are enlarged. When we come to Ezekiel's Temple, where the account does not mention something important—the Ark of the Covenant, for example—the omission is significant and intentional. However, we can include lesser details from Solomon's Temple for a better understanding. Only one piece of furniture is mentioned in connection with Ezekiel's Temple—a table—whereas Solomon's Temple had multiple candlesticks, etc. (Ezek. 41:22). The reason for the omission of other furniture in Ezekiel's Temple is that when the structure is built, the Church will be complete beyond the veil. Basically, this Temple will be a house of communication in the Kingdom.

Q: How will the two cherub faces be arranged in Ezekiel's Temple?

A: One cherub face will look to the left, and the other will look to the right. In between the two faces, on the same wall, will be a palm tree. The lion head represents Justice; the man's head represents Love—hence Justice and Love brought to victory. There will be a repeating theme (head, palm tree, head, etc.) on the boards, with the cherub heads facing the palm tree (victory). In the Tabernacle, the walls were not decorated. The curtain above, which draped over the boards and served as the ceiling, had embroidered cherubim, but the boards were not carved. The symbolism of the cherubim curtain pertained to the present life, the lesson being, “For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (Psa. 91:11).

Q: Where was the Shekinah light positioned in the Tabernacle?

A: The Shekinah light, representing God's Wisdom, was above the cherubim. The lid, or Mercy Seat, on the Ark of the Covenant represented Jesus, the Just One, and the box, or coffer, below

represented the Church. The Head of Christ is God (shown by the Shekinah light above), and the Head of the Church is Christ (shown by the Mercy Seat above the box).

1 Kings 6:30 And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

The floor of Solomon's Temple was also overlaid with gold, inside and out. The floor of the Tabernacle was sand, picturing the earth down here. The Temple represented the call to divinity, "whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4).

Q: Was the ceiling of Solomon's Temple also overlaid with gold?

A: Yes.

1 Kings 6:31 And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall.

1 Kings 6:32 The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees.

1 Kings 6:33 So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall.

1 Kings 6:34 And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding.

1 Kings 6:35 And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.

The entrance into the Tabernacle was a curtain. As it will be in Ezekiel's Temple, double doors were the entrance into Solomon's Temple (one door to enter and another to exit). The same carved pattern of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers went around the whole room on the inside, including the closed double doors. Among other symbolism and meaning, the *uninterrupted* pattern represented the complete encirclement of angels.

Verses 31 and 32 describe the double doors, made of olive wood overlaid with gold, that led into the Most Holy and covered one fifth of the wall. When the doors were closed, the inside of the Most Holy represented heaven, where God dwells—and where Jesus and the Church will dwell.

Verses 33-35 describe the entrance to the Holy, which had folding, hinged double doors that were made from fir (cedar) trees covered with gold. These doors occupied one fourth of the wall. The principle of five and four was also used in the Tabernacle, for there were five posts at the First Veil leading into the Holy and four posts at the Second Veil going into the Most Holy. Each folding door at the entrance to the Holy in Solomon's Temple was fastened to a post made of olive wood. On the inside, the doors had carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, which were covered with gold.

1 Kings 6:36 And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

Cedar beams were the top row, and three rows of hewed stones were underneath as a

foundation. Acacia (shittim) wood was used in the Tabernacle, whereas olive wood and cedar were used in Solomon's Temple. Cedar, which repels insects, is a symbol of everlasting life.

1 Kings 6:37 In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif:

1 Kings 6:38 And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

Seven years (from the fourth to the eleventh year of Solomon's reign) were required to build the Temple. The seven years represent the seven stages of the Church during the Gospel Age.

Bul, the eighth month, symbolizes a new beginning, that is, the time when the Temple would be dedicated. Solomon's Temple was finished in seven years by the *eighth* month.

1 Kings 7:1 But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

It took 13 years to build Solomon's personal house and only seven years to build the Temple. Thus he spent more time on the house of his own design and for his personal use than on the much larger Temple. We do not know if this time difference was unfavorable to Solomon, for the Temple plans, of divine origin, were already prepared and given to him by David. The fact that both the plans and the building materials were furnished by his father could have speeded up the construction of the Temple.

Solomon's house was terraced with an ornate stairway. The queen of Sheba was awed by the style of architecture of the stairway, which went *up* and connected his residence and the Temple. In a limited fashion, she tried to copy this stairway in her temple in the Luxor-Karnak area of Egypt.

1 Kings 7:2 He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.

1 Kings 7:3 And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty-five pillars, fifteen in a row.

1 Kings 7:4 And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks.

1 Kings 7:5 And all the doors and posts were square, with the windows: and light was against light in three ranks.

The "house of the forest of Lebanon" was part of the Solomon's Temple complex. This "house" was later copied, to a certain extent, to be part of Herod's Temple. Still in the Temple complex, the house of the forest of Lebanon was in between Solomon's Temple proper (the Holy and the Most Holy) and the king's personal house to the south. The counterpart in Herod's Temple was the porch where Jesus preached. Called Solomon's Porch, it was like a colonnade, a covered structure with columns, on the south side of the Herod's Temple complex.

Q: Was this "house" built with timber from Lebanon?

A: Yes.

The house was quite large, being 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. There were three rows of windows and a square effect, which was necessary because of the overall dimensions.

1 Kings 7:6 And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch was before them: and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them.

1 Kings 7:7 Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other.

1 Kings 7:8 And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch.

1 Kings 7:9 All these were of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court.

1 Kings 7:10 And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.

1 Kings 7:11 And above were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.

1 Kings 7:12 And the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for the porch of the house.

Verses 6-12 tell about Solomon's Porch in the house of the forest of Lebanon. Years later Herod the Great enlarged Zerubbabel's Temple by extending the southern platform with fill-in material. The result is called "Solomon's porch" in the New Testament (John 10:23). What Herod did was based on this account of the house of the forest of Lebanon and the porch described here.

Notice that Solomon used the term "great court" instead of "outer court." Both the inner court and the great court had three rows of hewn stones and one row of cedar beams.

Comment: The foundation stones were 10 cubits (15 feet) long. Hence they were comparable to some of the stones in the Great Pyramid.

Reply: Yes, although some of the stones, such as those in the ceiling of the Great Pyramid, were even larger. The foundation stones were about the size of the casing stones. The stones were "costly" in time, effort, and quality.

Solomon built a house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married. He did some things that were kind of squeamish, but they were overruled in the antitype to teach a good lesson. For instance, he had many wives, and Jesus will have a composite Bride of many wives. But with Solomon, the wives became a snare and a problem.

Incidentally, Eve was taken from Adam's rib, so that there would be man and woman. With the woman having a different emotional frame compared to the man, there was the feeling of need, the one for the other, whereas in perfection in the conditions of the future, that need will

be eliminated when it is brought together in the beings themselves. The physical instincts that were implanted in Adam can easily be neutralized in the future so that there will be no struggling against the flesh. Perfect man will not have to fight these desires, for he will have a feeling of completeness. The Sadducees tried to stumble Jesus by asking a hypothetical question about a woman who had seven husbands. As each husband died, the next brother married her. Their question was, "Which one will be her husband in the resurrection?" Jesus replied, "You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:23-30). Our thought is that the "power of God" is the genetic order. All beings—divine, spirit, and human—are made up of a mathematical genetic framework.

Q: Why did angels, spirit beings, want to be with earthly females?

A: When Adam was created perfect, he had a physical desire, and the same is true of the angels. They had a desire, but in the finished work, this will be changed, both with angels and humans. The Pastor indicated that the desire would gradually phase out.

Comment: Perhaps this desire was implanted in the angels, so when some of them materialized, they preferred to be in that state.

Reply: We do not know, but the suggestion is reasonable. In time, a change will be programmed into angels and humans, and that change will be for the good of all in the final analysis.

The holy angels could have had that change already. The angels needed to have a test. When Satan materialized and stayed down here, a lot of other angels eventually followed in his footsteps because God did not punish him. That was a tremendous test on the angels for perhaps a couple hundred years. Then came the Flood, and the angels who had sinned were imprisoned.

Luke 20:35,36 says that perfected mankind in the ages of ages will be like the holy angels subsequent to the test of the Flood period. Hence mankind will neither marry or be given in marriage, nor will they die anymore in the future. Originally when the angels beheld woman, they had this natural desire, but that constituted a test as to what they would do. The holy angels passed a crucial test, and their reward is that the key was turned to remove this desire.

Q: Did Jesus have that desire?

A: We are inclined to think so, but he was of such sterling quality that he did not succumb. Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Some have tried to idealize that Scripture, but we feel that he was tempted in every respect. Satan and Jesus were both created perfect, but Satan fell through evil desires. Jesus could have fallen, but he was of such sterling quality that he did not fall. That is what makes him so superior in every way because the temptations which came upon him were even more severe. Of course the divine nature is so superior that automatically that desire would be repulsive, but under normal conditions of perfection, the desire would not be in itself any more than it was with Adam and Eve originally, for their sin was disobedience. We believe that after one passes the really crucial test, whether man or angel, the individual will not be troubled anymore. That is why those of mankind who live beyond the Millennium will be like the holy angels. They will not marry because, like the holy angels already, mankind will lose the physical desire. As for the angels who fell, that was the very thing they wanted; hence they took unto them wives as they chose.

Thus there are some things we can learn indirectly. We can come to a fairly definite, accurate

understanding through indirect reasoning, but we have to be very careful in doing so. We would say it would require very careful treading so that our mind does not conjecture things which can lead us astray with our *own* wisdom. If we are trying to understand *God's* wisdom—thinking of why *He* did certain things and trying to give a rationale of why certain things happened in the Bible—we should give the utmost credit to Him as being nobler, wiser, and purer than any man or other being. We *know* there is a valid reason for certain things God does, even if we do not understand it. To try to see things in *His* light is a good motive.

Q: What was the chief motive of the fallen angels?

A: The angels were males, and the disobedient ones lusted for the human female. The reward for utmost obedience will be complete peace and tranquillity with regard to the flesh. That will be true for the Christian, for otherwise, we would have to fight evil desires throughout eternity. At the end of the Millennium, such peace will be the reward for the faithful of mankind. At death, that is the reward for faithful Christians; the change will come at their resurrection. With the holy angels, the test and reward have already taken place.

Having multiple wives was a snare for Solomon, but the antitype is that the glorified Jesus will marry Pharaoh's (God's) daughter, the Church. The same lesson is taught in the Joseph picture, for he married the daughter of a priest. This picture is pure in the antitype. Similarly, Adam did things that were wrong, but as the father of the human race, he is a type of Jesus, the Father of the regenerated human race. Therefore, we can take a perfect picture from an imperfect man, but to do so, we are limiting the perspective in which we view the type.

Comment: Adam will feel that everything that has happened is the result of his disobedience.

Comment: Adam will be the last to be resuscitated, and by that time, it will be apparent that God's Wisdom permitted all the evil. Therefore, although Adam will feel shame, he will see that all will work out for good. It would be too much for him to be brought back at the beginning of the general resurrection. And no doubt he felt a lot of contrition in the 900-plus years he lived after expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Reply: Adam will be surprised to find out how many children he has.

Solomon used worldly wisdom in connection with some of his acts. As an imperfect man, he allowed wisdom to lead him astray.

Comment: It is amazing how many times the Lord overruled man's disobedience to teach good lessons. For example, God knew in advance what would happen in the seven churches of Revelation along the lines of commerce, history, paganism, etc.

Reply: The Pastor said that out of every war came good. Things that seem to be very damaging and destructive can be overruled for good. And so the permission of evil will work for good because it provides lessons. For instance, we would not know the extent of God's love in allowing His Son to die on behalf of man, and we would not know our Savior's love in giving his life for man, unless things happened the way they did.

1 Kings 7:13 And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

1 Kings 7:14 He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

King Hiram was the product of a mixed marriage. His mother was an Israelite, and his father was of Tyre. Generally speaking, the mother determines whether one is a Jew, so Hiram was of the tribe of Naphtali.

Verse 14 reminds us of Bezaleel, who was specially skilled in fashioning articles in connection with the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Exod. 31:2-5). Hiram's specialty was brass, but he could do other things as well.

1 Kings 7:15 For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

Hiram cast two pillars of brass, each 18 cubits (27 feet) high with a circumference of 12 cubits (18 feet), or about 6 feet in diameter. Thus we get some idea of the grandeur of these pillars. To "cast" the pillars means that a mold was used. Probably a deep hole was dug, a mold was made, and molten brass was poured in the mold to harden into a complete circle. The two pillars would have been very impressive because brass resembled gold, especially with ornate work on top.

1 Kings 7:16 And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapter was five cubits:

1 Kings 7:17 And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter.

1 Kings 7:18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.

1 Kings 7:19 And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

There were all types of columns down through history. With regard to the ornamentation, chapiters were on top of the main shaft. In Egypt, for example, the top of some pillars was ornamented with a papyrus-type plant. In this case, chapiters of lily work were on top of the pillars, and the flowers protruded outward. The chapiters, which were 7 1/2 feet high, were made of molten brass, and probably they were hammered out.

When a person looked at the inner Temple (the center structure with the Holy and the Most Holy), one of the most prominent features was a porch, like a verandah, in front of the Holy. (The Tabernacle lacked this feature, for a person just went through the First Veil in front of the pillars and into the Holy.) With Solomon's Temple, one went up by steps onto the porch and then walked across the porch to the entrance into the Holy. An elevated platform right in front of the Temple, the porch was utilized for public occasions, such as when the high priest addressed the people or led in singing.

Q: Was this the equivalent of "Solomon's porch," which was used by Jesus in Herod's Temple?

A: No. Solomon's Porch was more for the Israelites in general. Being in the outer court, it was used more by the general public. Study classes were held on the porch, and there was opportunity for religious discussions. It was like an open-air synagogue; the porch had a roof and pillars (or columns) supporting the roof, and open air circulated. There Jesus took the opportunity to teach the people.

In addition, the chapter on top of each pillar had seven “nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work.” In other words, seven loops that were like a chain encircled the top of each pillar. There is a problem with most of the beautiful temples in the various countries because birds, especially pigeons, nest at the top of the pillars with all the nooks and crannies. Therefore, the loops, the “nets of checker work,” were a practical way of preventing birds from roosting at the top of the pillars, for the birds were fearful of getting their wings caught. The “checker[ed] work” was like a screen; it was like lace or embroidery work.

The King James has both strengths and weaknesses, and so does the Revised Standard. When dimensions are given, it is important to discern whether they are presented from a horizontal fashion or a vertical fashion. Sometimes the same word can be used either way depending on the perspective of the description. Many who are unaware of this fact get into perplexing situations in just trying to follow the literal account. Otherwise, there would be a standard description in all Bible versions.

1 Kings 7:20 And the chapters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter.

In connection with this “network,” there were two rows of pomegranates. One row of pomegranates hung the “net,” and the other row pulled in the bottom. Like the lily work, the pomegranates were made of brass or copper.

In all, 200 pomegranates went around the girth of each chapter. A pomegranate, a fruit that is full of seeds, tastes like the sum, or combination, of many fruits. Hence the pomegranate represents the fruits (plural) of the Holy Spirit.

Comment: The nets were like ornate veils.

Reply: The nets were designed so that the onlooker could see through them. They were probably made of chains that were very fine, like a necklace. Although nets are not mentioned in Ezekiel’s Temple, this detail is probably carried over to the Temple of the future.

1 Kings 7:21 And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

1 Kings 7:22 And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

The two pillars were set up in the porch in front of the Holy. The right pillar was called Jachin, and the left pillar was Boaz. How interesting that they were given *names!* Of the two names, the more important one was Boaz, for in the Book of Ruth, Boaz was a type of Christ. The Boaz pillar was on the left of the Temple but *on the right from the perspective of the viewer facing the Temple*. The Jachin pillar was *on the left from the perspective of the viewer facing the Temple*. That pillar represented the Church.

The Temple represents a position of beauty and permanence; hence the Church class will be in a fixed, secure, established position when glorified, having immortality for eternity. Just as Jesus will sit on a throne and the Church will be to his right, so from the perspective of one who was on the porch with his back to the Temple, Jachin (the Church) was to the right of Boaz (Jesus). Stated another way, Jachin (the Church) is to the right of Boaz (Jesus), just as Jesus is to

the right of the Father.

Comment: Jachin means “he shall establish,” and Boaz means “strength” or “in it is strength.”

Comment: The Revised Standard says that Jachin was on the south and Boaz was on the north.

Reply: The thought is the same in effect. Solomon’s Temple faced east, so when one viewed the Temple, Boaz was to the right (or the north), and Jachin was to the left (or the south). Spiritually speaking, Boaz came from the north (heaven), and Jachin came from the south (earth). North is the more favorable direction, just as right is the more favorable position.

1 Kings 7:23 And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

1 Kings 7:24 And under the brim of it round about there were knobs compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knobs were cast in two rows, when it was cast.

1 Kings 7:25 It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.

1 Kings 7:26 And it was an handbreadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths.

The Laver was very beautiful, large, and impressive, being 10 cubits (15 feet) in diameter and 30 cubits (45 feet) in circumference. The brim of the Laver was a handbreadth thick. To make a replica of the Laver, one would need a proper understanding of the account. Otherwise, there would be a mathematical problem, a discrepancy, for pi (3.14159) is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. However, the discrepancy is accounted for by the width of the brim.

“And it was an handbreadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies.” The Laver was like a giant cup with a flared edge, or lip. The thickness of the main body of the Laver (the cup) was 3 to 4 inches, that is, the thickness of a handbreadth. Lilies and other delicate ornamentation were all around on the lip, or flare, of the Laver. There was other “embroidery” work on the main shaft, or bowl, underneath.

The Laver rested on the hindquarters, or backs, of 12 oxen, which faced outward. Three oxen faced each side of the compass. Back there the Jews understood the oxen, or bullocks, to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. In the Gospel Age, they would picture the 12 spiritual tribes that are called through Jesus. The 12 apostles are in the picture as well.

With God’s people, the Laver represents the *power, strength, and justice* of the Word. The water in the Laver was for literal cleansing in the Jewish Age. From the spiritual standpoint in the Gospel Age, the Laver (the Word of God) holds the water of cleansing, life, and truth. In the Kingdom Age, it will do the same type of work but in a more visible fashion. The lily is a symbol of resurrection.

The priests were to wash both their hands and their feet at the Laver. Spigots drew off water so that the one washing did not contaminate the water supply. Jesus said that he who has his feet washed is every whit clean (John 13:10).

Here the large Laver is stated to have contained 2,000 baths, but the account in 2 Chronicles 4:5 lists the contents as 3,000 baths. The correct amount can be calculated mathematically by dividing the area of the Laver by the “bath” quantity.

1 Kings 7:27 And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it.

1 Kings 7:28 And the work of the bases was on this manner: they had borders, and the borders were between the ledges:

1 Kings 7:29 And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges there was a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work.

1 Kings 7:30 And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver were undersetters molten, at the side of every addition.

In addition to the main Laver, there were ten smaller subsidiary lavers that were portable with wheels. Each of the ten square bases for the lavers had axles for the wheels. Similarly, there were ten movable candlesticks, or lamp stands, in Solomon’s Temple.

On the borders of the bases were “lions, oxen, and [even] cherubim,” that is, God’s attributes of Justice (the lions) and Power (the oxen). The main Laver had 12 oxen, representing Power. The subsidiary lavers had both Justice and Power.

In studying the Bible, many have certain fixed opinions, whereas a broad understanding of Scripture gives the right balance. The Orthodox Jew is very religious with a great emphasis on ceremony. In addition, the teaching is not to make any graven image or likeness. Hence many have felt that under no circumstance should an image be made of anything, yet in Solomon’s Temple, the most prominent structure in their midst, things were made according to the likeness of creatures. However, there was a different significance than with the images in heathen religions, where Satan counterfeits the beautiful architecture and symbolisms of Scripture. The commandment reads, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Exod. 20:4,5). But notice that there is a modifying clause, namely, “Thou shalt not bow down [and worship the graven image].” Moses was not saying that under no circumstance could a graven image be made. His point was that under no circumstance were the Israelites to make a graven image and *bow or kneel to it*. Proof that graven images in and of themselves are permissible is that they existed in Solomon’s Temple.

1 Kings 7:31 And the mouth of it within the chapter and above was a cubit: but the mouth thereof was round after the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it were gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round.

1 Kings 7:32 And under the borders were four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels were joined to the base: and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit.

1 Kings 7:33 And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten.

1 Kings 7:34 And there were four undersettors to the four corners of one base: and the undersettors were of the very base itself.

1 Kings 7:35 And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof were of the same.

1 Kings 7:36 For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about.

Verses 31-36 describe the bases, which were like carts, or platforms, with wheels for the ten smaller lavers. Even the bases had ornamentation. The remarkable workmanship made Solomon's Temple one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Q: Will Ezekiel's Temple have similar ornamentation?

A: That Temple will be much simpler, but it will be very beautiful from the standpoint of proportion, whereas the embellishments of Solomon's Temple have a symbolic significance.

Verse 36 introduces "palm trees," which, along with the cherubim and lions, symbolize Love and Justice brought to victory. A cleansing is indicated.

The ten subsidiary lavers got their water supply from the main Laver. In other words, they were moved over on their carts to the spigots of the main Laver and filled. Even with the smaller lavers, which were still a good size, there were spigots, and the washing was for specific purposes. The main Laver, which was a much larger body of water, was appropriately called a "sea" (verse 23). Those in the Roman Catholic hierarchy have blatantly called Papacy the "Holy See." And the pope is carried around in the *Sedia Gestatoria*, which is a counterfeit of the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy, where God Himself figuratively dwells. As the pope is transported, he blasphemously sits on the throne taking God's place. As time went on, a worldly philosophy was woven in, and the teaching was promoted that the Catholic Church reigns on this side of the veil, occupying the positions of honor and prominence that Jesus and his true Church will have in the Kingdom. Thus Kingdom promises of the *next* age were applied to the *present* age. We believe that the Holy See is related to this misapplication of Scripture. In addition, Papacy issues papal bulls—powerful decrees or messages—which are a counterfeit of the bulls under the Laver.

Q: With the main Laver being 7 1/2 feet high, how would the Israelites have filled it with water?

A: They would have had a wooden ladder, a derrick arrangement, or something else. The Romans contrived wooden machines with wheels, and the Egyptians had the shadoof, so the Israelites would have had some means. (The shadoof was a bucket on a long arm that dipped into the Nile and had a brace like a derrick by which the bucket could be lifted up and wheeled around for emptying into a channel for irrigation purposes.) Simple, ordinary people made some of these contrivances for themselves, and the contrivances were very effective.

1 Kings 7:37 After this manner he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size.

All ten subsidiary lavers were the same shape, size, and dimension; that is, they were identical.

1 Kings 7:38 Then made he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: and every laver was four cubits: and upon every one of the ten bases one laver.

1 Kings 7:39 And he put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south.

1 Kings 7:40 And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD:

1 Kings 7:41 The two pillars, and the two bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars;

1 Kings 7:42 And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that were upon the pillars;

1 Kings 7:43 And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases;

1 Kings 7:44 And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea;

1 Kings 7:45 And the pots, and the shovels, and the basins: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, were of bright brass.

1 Kings 7:46 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.

These verses give us some idea of the complexity, immensity, and beauty of Solomon's Temple. From the description given here, one could almost build the Temple today, but not with the same beauty.

King Hiram was responsible for making the two pillars Jachin and Boaz, the main ("sea") Laver, the ten subsidiary lavers and their bases, all the vessels (pots, shovels, and basins), the chapiters on top of the pillars, the "networks," and the 12 oxen under the sea. Everything was made of brass. The ten smaller brass lavers contained only 40 baths each compared to the 2,000 or 3,000 baths in the main Laver.

The two main pillars were not perfectly rectangular all the way up on one side, and they decreased slightly in diameter toward the top, graduating inward. Then, on each pillar, a ring projected outward—like a bracelet followed by a little space—just before the chapter.

1 Kings 7:47 And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.

1 Kings 7:48 And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the showbread was,

1 Kings 7:49 And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold,

1 Kings 7:50 And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple.

1 Kings 7:51 So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

King Solomon, not Hiram of Tyre, was responsible for all the *gold* work: the Altar, the Table of Showbread, the ten candlesticks, all the gold vessels, and the door hinges. Of the ten candlesticks, five were on one side in the Holy, and five were on the other side; they were “before the oracle [the Most Holy].”

Solomon’s Temple was designed of the Lord to represent the Church in glory, the Temple class of the future, but it was polluted in various ways that did not befit the original design—stables were built, foreign articles were brought into the court, there were burials, etc. In Revelation 1:13, where Jesus is walking in the midst of the *seven* candlesticks, the candlesticks represent the seven stages of the Church down through the Gospel Age. With Solomon’s Temple, there were *ten* candlesticks, but the principle was somewhat the same. Moreover, in analyzing the message to each of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, we notice that the messages were to a *mixed* class: to the truly consecrated and to those who merely professed to be Christians. Thus merely nominal Christians mingled with true Christians. Accordingly, as Solomon’s Temple was a picture of the Gospel Age, so Papacy was inclined to take Old Testament pictures and Scriptures that apply to the still future Kingdom Age and misapply them to the present age by incorporating them into its litany and service. To a certain extent, even though Solomon’s Temple was of God’s design, the services were changed even in the type, as we will see, for wrong practices were introduced by various Israelite kings.

The Apostle Paul said to Christians in the present age, “Know ye not that ye are [called to be] the *temple* [class] of God [in the *future* age], and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16). And the Apostle Peter said, “Ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). However, the Church is not a “royal priesthood” in the present life. Christians are called to be of the royal priesthood *if* they are “*faithful unto death*” (Rev. 2:10). So here a picture of the future is stated as if it applies to the present age—as regards both true and professed Christians. The point is that what seems to be a contradiction can be harmonized with regard to the truly consecrated, but there is a problem with the unconsecrated because they got mixed in. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares shows the same situation (Matt. 13:24-30,37-43). What started as a wheat field at the beginning of the Gospel Age became a tare field as time went on.

Q: Does Solomon’s Temple picture unconsecrated individuals being in the Holy during the Gospel Age?

A: A lot of strange things happened in the history of the purportedly true Temple of God, which was *designed to be holy*. The design of Solomon’s Temple was of God, and David gave the plans to Solomon. On one occasion, a king presumed to go into the Holy, thinking he had the right to offer incense. When another king went to Damascus, he had a heathen altar copied, duplicated, and put in the court of Solomon’s Temple. Therefore, while this Temple provided certain idealistic pictures, and the ten candlesticks, like the ten virgins of the parable, were in the Holy, there was a *mixture*, for a tare element was also in the professedly true Temple of God. The Apostle Jude spoke of this situation when he said that right in the Lord’s feast, *in the same room and service* where the Lord’s people are communicating together, there would be a Second Death class who are recognized as brethren. Of course we have to give everyone a proper benefit of the doubt as long as a deflection is not outwardly obvious and atrocious, so an unrecognized Second Death class can be among the brethren and given the designation

“brother” and “sister.”

Incidentally, the general usage of the number 10 pertains to this side of the veil from two different perspectives. Sometimes the number is favorable and good, as with the ten virgins and with the ten men who will take hold of the skirt of a Jew (Zech. 8:23; Matt. 25:1), and sometimes it is unfavorable or evil, as with the ten toes of the image and with the ten horns of the beast (Dan. 2:41,42; Rev. 13:1; 17:3,12).

“So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD.” Thus all the appurtenances and vessels of the Temple were finished. Then Solomon “brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels,” and put them “among the treasures of the house of the LORD.” The dedication ceremony was yet to take place (see chapter 8).

1 Kings 8:1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.

1 Kings 8:2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

When all the articles of furniture were completed, Solomon called together the elders, the heads of the tribes, and the “chief of the fathers” for the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. The assemblage took place in the month of Ethanim (or Tishri), the seventh month, which was approximately October. Generally speaking, spring and fall were important in prophecy and in the happenings of the Old Testament. This “feast” was the Feast of Tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. In preparation for the dedication of the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant had to be brought from Zion, the City of David.

1 Kings 8:3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

1 Kings 8:4 And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

In addition to the Ark of the Covenant, the appurtenances of the Tabernacle (the curtain and all the holy vessels) were brought by the priests and the Levites to the Temple site in Jerusalem. The curtain was folded up and put in the Temple treasury, or storage rooms, which were in a separate building abutting the sides of the Holy and the Most Holy. There was a definite cleavage between the building and the Temple Holy and Most Holy, but the separation could not be seen, so to the viewer, they looked like one building. Included in the storage rooms were items that were needed for the services—such as incense, oil, and ropes to pull up the animals for flaying. David had contributed a tremendous sum of metals, and the excess was also put in the treasury. Of course the Ark itself was put into the Most Holy.

Q: Since the Feast of Tabernacles pertains to the world, is the thought that if Solomon’s Temple had not been sullied, it would have represented the true Church, and when the true Church is complete, blessings will go out to the world?

A: Yes.

1 Kings 8:5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor

numbered for multitude.

In connection with this transfer of Tabernacle appurtenances into the Temple, the house of permanence, there was not only rejoicing but also sacrificing, as though to seek the Lord's blessing—including on how the Ark was being handled and even when it was put into the Most Holy. The reason for such circumspection is that years earlier when David was bringing the Ark from Gibeah to another part of Jerusalem where a tent had been erected, the Ark was transported improperly in a wagon. At one point, Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the Ark, and he was struck dead as a result (2 Sam. 6:3-7). Since the sacrifices are mentioned here, we assume that everything was done correctly under Solomon and that the lesson had been learned. In the previous transporting of the Ark, the priests were responsible for not following God's instructions.

1 Kings 8:6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

1 Kings 8:7 For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

1 Kings 8:8 And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

The Ark was brought into the "oracle" (the Most Holy) and put under the wings of the large Temple cherubim, representing Love and Power, their wings outstretched as they stood side by side, facing outward.

Staves were used to transport the Ark and carry it into the Most Holy. The staves were slid through rings on the side of the Ark so that it could be carried without being touched. When the Ark was brought in and set down, the staves, which were fairly long, were pulled out so that they could be seen in the Holy but not outside of the Holy. Also, they were positioned so that they could be seen without being an obstacle. The staves were much longer than the Ark, so being elevated, they could have been in the way. However, to keep that from happening, the staves were put down on the floor and then pushed out so that they protruded into the Holy. Their being seen in the Holy was the evidence that the Ark was in the Most Holy and that it had been taken in there by this means.

Q: Do the staves have any particular symbolic significance?

A: The Ark, called God's "chariot," or vehicle, is what bears Jesus and the Church (1 Chron. 28:18). Therefore, if the two staves are a type, they probably represent the Old and New Testaments.

Q: The staves being pulled out signified that they would never again be used because the Ark had reached its permanent home. Were the staves left there to show that the Ark had previously been on a journey?

A: Yes, the Ark was now in a position of rest; it was a *finished* work.

Q: What happened to the Ark of the Covenant?

A: Jeremiah 3:16 tells that the Ark will never be found. "And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The

ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.” The Ark is probably something like Moses’ body in that it will never be found. The golden Ark of the Covenant represents the glorified Church, a complete class that will not be seen because it has been developed and transported to its house of rest. Appropriately, there will be no Ark in Ezekiel’s Temple, which will supplant both the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple. Only one little article of furniture will be in the Holy, and nothing will be in the Most Holy of that new structure. To have an Ark would distract from Ezekiel’s Temple.

The Ark being in Solomon’s Temple helps in the understanding of Revelation 11:19, which says that the Ark is in the Most Holy (in symbol). “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.” The reference is to this dedication service of chapter 8 with Solomon, for antitypically, when the Temple class is finished, the Ark will be brought in. Jeremiah 3:16 shows that the Ark will lose its significance in the next age.

1 Kings 8:9 There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

Nothing was in the Ark at this time except the two stone tables of the Law. The golden pot of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded were purposely omitted. When the Ark was brought into the Most Holy of Solomon’s Temple, why was it fitting that these two articles were missing?

Comment: Aaron’s rod pictured the election and selection of the Church. Since the Church was now finished in the antitype, it was appropriate that Aaron’s rod not be there, for election and selection will cease after the 144,000 are found.

Reply: The budding of Aaron’s rod showed God’s elect in connection with the Tabernacle services. The Aaronic (sacrificing) priesthood pictures a different arrangement than the Melchisedec (reigning) priesthood. To qualify to be of the future Melchisedec priesthood, one must be faithful as a priest now, in the present age. The Aaronic priesthood wears white linen sacrificial garments, whereas the Melchisedec priesthood, which combines the offices of king and priest, wears garments of glory and beauty. In other words, in the Mosaic arrangement, the offices of king and priest were separate—the king was not a priest, and the priest was not a king—but in the future, both offices will be combined. At present, church and state are to be kept separate, but in the Kingdom, they will be united.

The golden pot of manna was a picture of immortality. In the type, the manna did not corrupt. The fact that it was missing in the Ark in Solomon’s Temple tells us that when the Church is complete, there will be no more opportunity to run for the high calling of the divine nature. The calling to glory, honor, and immortality will have ended (Rom. 2:7).

The Scriptures do not say when or how the golden pot of manna was taken out. It is just stated as a historical fact that when the Ark was put in the Most Holy of Solomon’s Temple, the only residual article in the coffer was the tables of the Law. The two tables tell us that God’s Law will *always* be in effect. The New Covenant will likewise require obedience to God’s will—but under a new age and arrangement. The Grace Covenant is in harmony with the *principles* of God’s Law, but it is a higher law than even the literal Law of Moses, especially for those who make their calling and election sure. God’s Law will be taught to mankind in the Kingdom.

Solomon’s Temple was beautiful, and it taught wonderful lessons pertaining to the finished antitype. We should keep God’s *original* design in mind, for what happened later is another

matter. In the Book of Revelation, a virgin with brilliant white clothing and a golden diadem on her head and the moon under her feet pictures the Church in pristine beauty in the beginning. But as time went on, the Church developed into two women. One was Jezebel, who seduced Christians, and the other was the pure Church, which had to flee into the wilderness. Hence the defilement of Solomon's Temple pictures what happened during the Gospel Age with the true woman (the true Church) and the false woman (the false, or nominal, Church).

Up to this point, the general lesson of Solomon's Temple is very important in understanding the Book of Revelation. In the antitype, there will come a time in history when the true Church is complete, yet some of the consecrated will remain in the flesh. The Little Flock will all be on the other side of the veil, but the Great Company will still be in the Holy. The Great Company will perceive, ahead of the world, that the marriage of the Lamb has come (Rev. 19:7). The type of Solomon's Temple brings the picture up to that situation and then stops.

Comment: The exposed staves lying in the Holy indicate the Great Company's recognition that the door to the high calling is shut.

Reply: Yes. The Great Company with present truth will tell others about the closing of the door.

1 Kings 8:10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,

1 Kings 8:11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

The "glory of the LORD," a "cloud," or smoke, filled the "house of the LORD"; that is, the cloud filled both the Holy and the Most Holy. The priests could not minister the sacrifices on behalf of the people until the glory subsided. Like the Passover, this is a double picture. The priests could not perform the earthly service until the dedication was complete. The dedication was held before all Israel, for King Solomon had summoned all the notables, and as many as were interested could come to witness the dedication of the Temple. But before Solomon offered his prayer, there was this manifestation that the Temple was acceptable to God. In one sense, the Temple was ready for service, and in another sense, it was not ready. God had put His hand on the Temple to say, "It is acceptable." The very fact the cloud filled the house signified God's presence. Now the expeditious thing to do was to have a prayer and a formal dedication before the people.

1 Kings 8:12 Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

1 Kings 8:13 I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.

Solomon spoke, "The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness." Apparently, while Solomon was out in the court by the altar, facing the Temple, some of the "glory" came out of the seams of the house, which was not open to public view. Knowing that God's glory had filled the house, Solomon then acknowledged what had happened, so he turned around to the people to give them a blessing. Whether the glory was above the Temple to a certain extent, showing that it had penetrated, or whether it just came out the seams of the structure, there would have been some evidence to the king that this had happened.

No one could enter the Temple. And if there was any doubt and someone tried to go in, he

would have found that the glory was too bright. At any rate, there was some way the people knew that God's glory had filled the Temple.

Comment: The people knew the history of the dedication of the Tabernacle—that the Lord's glory had filled it when the structure was complete. With that event in their memory, there would have been a great reverence.

Reply: In a discourse, one brother said that if those listening to his talk knew the Lord was in the next room, they would all rush into that room, and he would be left talking to no one. However, we question that reasoning, for if we knew the Lord was in the next room, we would first stop and ask, "Am I in the proper heart condition to enter?" There is reverence and decorum with the divine office.

With regard to the Tabernacle, a cloud covered the whole nation. From that main body cloud, an appendage dropped—like a dark column, or pillar, of smoke—and attached itself to the Tabernacle. As long as the pillar was attached, the Israelites knew they were to stay in that place. The pillar indicated that God's presence was in the Tabernacle, but since no man can see God and live, the people knew that inside that cloud, or pillar, was an overwhelming glory no man could look upon (Exod. 33:20). The glory went into the Most Holy as the brilliant Shekinah light *above* the two cherubim. Only the high priest could go into the Most Holy under that circumstance. When it was time for the Tabernacle to move, the pillar was drawn up into the main body cloud, and the people knew they had to prepare for a journey. Therefore, as soon as the pillar retracted, the people started to pack their belongings. At that point, the Shekinah light was not in the Most Holy. Then the high priest went in and took down the veil between the Holy and the Most Holy and covered the Ark. Now the other priests could go into the Most Holy to carry out the Ark with staves. When everything was packed and the people were ready, the cloud began to move. In whatever direction the cloud went, the people followed and stayed under it.

That cloud of smoke was called the "angel of God," for it represented Jehovah's presence among His people (Exod. 14:19). The Israelites would say that God's power and glory were in the cloud, that His presence was manifested there. On occasion, judgment came forth from the cloud. For example, lightning came out of that dark cloud and killed Nadab and Abihu. After a while, the Israelites felt that the cloud was like an "angel," for it seemed to have knowledge and to know where to go.

Hence Solomon said in effect, "It is true that God's glory is robed in darkness lest we see Him." Smoke was the evidence that a connection had been made with the Temple and that it was acceptable to God. In regard to the dedication of the Tabernacle, Exodus 40:34,35 states, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." Thus many years earlier the Tabernacle was filled with smoke—and now the same thing happened at the dedication of Solomon's Temple. In the future Ezekiel's Temple, there will also be a dedication, and again God's glory will fill the structure.

1 Kings 8:14 And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;)

Solomon would have beckoned the people to stand.

1 Kings 8:15 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying,

1 Kings 8:16 Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.

1 Kings 8:17 And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

It was commendable and proper that Solomon gave his father David the credit for wanting to build God a “house.” The Tabernacle was in Shiloh for several hundred years and was also temporarily in a private home, but the Temple was now a permanent dwelling place in the city of Jerusalem. Solomon gave credit to the relationship between God and Israel—that David’s relationship was unique—and to the fact it had been on David’s heart, rather than on his own heart, to build the Temple. As David’s son, Solomon entered into that spirit subsequently, but he made sure the credit went to his father.

1 Kings 8:18 And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.

1 Kings 8:19 Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.

1 Kings 8:20 And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

1 Kings 8:21 And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Solomon acknowledged his responsibility now, as head of the nation, to carry out the purpose of the Temple, which was of Divine Providence.

Comment: David could not build the Temple because he was a man of war.

Reply: Yes, David pictured the Church in the flesh during its period of warfare struggling against the problems of life. Solomon represented the reign of rest and peace—the Church beyond the veil.

Notice that Solomon identified the covenant with the two stone tables of the Law that were in the Ark. “I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD [the stone tables], which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.” In other words, the two tables of stone symbolized a covenant. On them were written God’s cardinal commandments.

1 Kings 8:22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:

“Solomon *stood* before the altar ... in the presence of all the congregation ... and spread forth his hands toward heaven.”

Comment: Verse 54 of this chapter states, “And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he *arose* from before the altar of the LORD, *from kneeling on his knees* with his hands spread up to heaven.” 2 Chronicles 6:12,13

reads, “And he *stood* before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands: For Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, *and kneeled down upon his knees* before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven.”

Reply: Earlier, when blessing the congregation, Solomon faced the Most Holy. Now he turned around and faced the people, as described here. In doing that, he first drew attention to himself by standing prominently. Then he got down on his knees and uttered the prayer.

1 Kings 8:23 And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart:

Solomon began the prayer with a qualifying factor: God “keepest covenant and mercy” with His servants who walk before Him “*with all their heart.*”

1 Kings 8:24 Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

1 Kings 8:25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.

Again Solomon gave credit to David, with whom God had especially dealt. Of David’s many sons, Solomon was selected to be the next king, so it was proper for him to appreciate that the God of *David*, who was also the God of *Israel*, was involved in his being on the throne.

The King James margin and the Revised Standard are better for verse 25, which is conditional: “Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father what thou hast promised him, saying, “There shall never fail you a man before me to sit upon the throne of Israel, *if only* your sons take heed to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.”” Solomon repeated what God had promised David. Of course there was disobedience, and the lineage was changed, so although the “sure mercies of David” did come in the Davidic line, they were not necessarily through Solomon solely (Isa. 55:3).

1 Kings 8:26 And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

Solomon asked that God’s word to David be verified. He wanted a sign of approval, which came later.

1 Kings 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

“The heaven and [the] heaven of heavens cannot contain thee [God].” Moses said many years earlier, “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD’S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is” (Deut. 10:14). Verse 27 is a clue that God dwells above and separate from the entire universe, which is like an oval rug. Actually, various universes are part of the warp and woof of the rug. God’s throne is in the highest heaven.

Comment: Many years later eight Levites acknowledged God as the Creator. “Thou, even thou,

art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee” (Neh. 9:5,6).

1 Kings 8:28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee today:

1 Kings 8:29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

Solomon requested that God’s eyes be open toward the Temple and that anyone who prayed in that direction as a mark of respect and reverence be rewarded because he would be obeying the earlier instruction through Moses, namely, that there would be, at some time in the future, a place where the Lord would establish His nominal residence. “Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: But *in the place which the LORD shall choose* in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee” (Deut. 12:13,14; see also Deut. 12:18; 14:23; 15:20; 16:2,7,11,15,16; 31:11). In other words, when the Israelites would enter the land and build “the place” that God would choose, He would hearken to the prayer.

Q: If we think of the Pleiades as the center of the universe, would those stars be not only in the center but also above?

A: The Pleiades, called the Seven Sisters, are probably the “heaven of heavens.” Jesus is to build a house for the Church, so we are to think of the Pleiades more from that standpoint. Although the movement is not perceptible now, the entire universe revolves around the Pleiades. Every 25,800-plus years there is a complete revolution of the zodiacal heavens, but the heavens beyond them are not necessarily involved.

Verse 29 reminds us of Daniel, who prayed three times a day in the direction of (the destroyed) Solomon’s Temple while he was in exile (Dan. 6:10).

Comment: With the Temple being a symbol of God’s presence and the center of their prayers, we can understand why the Israelites were in despair when it was destroyed.

Reply: Yes, the destruction was a mark of disfavor. The godly Israelites yearned for the Temple to be restored.

1 Kings 8:30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace: and when thou hearest, forgive.

Comment: Observing human nature, Solomon realized that the people would have to ask for forgiveness many times. In subsequent verses, he listed specific conditions in which punishments would come for disobedience and forgiveness would have to be asked. Solomon prayed, “Hearken to my supplication and to the supplication of your people Israel, and grant forgiveness when prayer is made toward the Temple.”

1 Kings 8:31 If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house:

1 Kings 8:32 Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

Verses 31 and 32 remind us of when Jesus talked about hypocritical prayer, saying that some would swear by heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, or the Temple (Matt. 5:34,35; 23:16). In time, it was felt that Jews could be almost anywhere in the country and say, “I swear by heaven.” However, they were speaking too loosely. Here the condition was, “If ... the oath come[s] before *thine altar in this house*.” The point was to realize the solemnity of an oath or vow that was made before the altar; the Lord would not take it lightly.

1 Kings 8:33 When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house:

1 Kings 8:34 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

The Law said that when the nation pleased God, a few could chase 10,000 (Lev. 26:7,8). When the nation displeased God, the reverse would be true—a few of the enemy would rout 10,000 Israelites (Deut. 32:30). Hence the defeat of Israel in battle meant there was something wrong; it was a sign of disfavor.

Sometimes a profound statement is uttered, and the individual is unaware of the wisdom it contains. As Jesus said, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise” (Matt. 21:16). Solomon, Israel’s third king, prayed the words of verses 33 and 34. Throughout the five centuries in which kings ruled Israel, there is no record of that nation’s defeat in the sense of being put out of their own territory and needing not merely forgiveness but also reinstatement in the land, although the ten tribes did go into captivity in time. Evidently, in his own prayer, Daniel reverted back to this thinking in Solomon’s prayer because he seemed to be alluding to certain statements Moses had made shortly before his death. The exemplary Daniel confessed his own sins and then pleaded the cause of his people in harmony with this dedication request: “Hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.” Of course at that time, there was no Temple, so in trying to get reinstatement, Daniel prayed toward the place where the house once stood—Jerusalem. His faith was profound, for it embraced long periods of time.

1 Kings 8:35 When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them:

1 Kings 8:36 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

Notice that Solomon started out with an *individual*: “If any man trespass against his neighbour....” (1 Kings 8:31). Then he prayed with regard to the *nation* being taken into captivity and wanting restoration: “When *thy people Israel* be smitten down before the enemy....” (verse 33). Out of respect for what God had said earlier, he asked that the Temple be a magnet in connection with making the people’s prayers effective. Now he talked about the withholding of rain, which was also a subject in Moses’ dissertation. The withholding of rain, which brought crop failure, also meant that the Israelites had sinned. In that case, Solomon asked for an instructor to show the people the error of their way: “Teach them the good way

wherein they should walk [so that they can retrace their steps].” Solomon’s prayer contained a wide range of thinking.

1 Kings 8:37 If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be;

1 Kings 8:38 What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house:

1 Kings 8:39 Then hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

1 Kings 8:40 That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

Famine, pestilence, etc.—a multitude of problems that might arise—would also need repentance. In each case, the focal point was the *Temple*. As Christians, we have *Jesus* as our focal point. As he said, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13,14). Our prayers to God are directed to Jesus in order that they might be effective and heard. Back there the people were being schooled to direct their minds to a channel. The promises made to Israel were material, and so was their focal point, the Temple. Christians look forward to a heavenly abode; hence their promises and focal point (Jesus) are spiritual. In either case, the underlying principle is the same.

Comment: Solomon was asking God to forgive the Israelites based on their repentance and according to their heart condition.

Reply: Yes, and God knows the heart. Solomon was not asking for mechanical forgiveness just because the Israelites might turn toward the Temple, but if they asked for forgiveness out of respect and reverence and with a contrite heart, he prayed that God would be merciful.

1 Kings 8:41 Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name’s sake;

1 Kings 8:42 (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house;

1 Kings 8:43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

Now Solomon asked on behalf of the “stranger” and those of foreign birth or extraction who were in the land. He looked beyond the Jewish standpoint and was thinking of God’s name, honor, and glory. For a stranger to have an attitude of reverence and respect would indicate that he had a proselyte spirit. He was drawing near to the Lord by even thinking along this line and by making the effort to come and pray toward the Temple. Solomon asked for the prayers of such individuals to be heard.

Comment: The term “stretched out arm” was first used in Exodus 6:6, indicating God’s mighty power. “Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments.”

Reply: There are several aspects of the “stretched out arm.” God’s stretched-out arm can be a sign of either favor or fury (disfavor). The term can also be viewed the other way around, that is, as the stretched-out arm of the suppliant who importunes in prayer. Whatever a person’s problem may be, he is seeking a connection with God or an evidence of restoration.

1 Kings 8:44 If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name:

1 Kings 8:45 Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

1 Kings 8:46 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;

1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

1 Kings 8:48 And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name:

Solomon prayed, “If, before the Israelites go to battle and join a confrontation, they turn to the Temple to seek the Lord’s blessing and guidance, may the prayer be honored.” Solomon added another ramification, namely, if some of the Israelites were taken captive.

This prayer was quite long and intense for Solomon to offer on his knees. Out of respect for their king, the people would have been kneeling too. As part of his prayer, Solomon uttered a profound statement: “There is no man that sinneth not.”

1 Kings 8:49 Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwellingplace, and maintain their cause,

1 Kings 8:50 And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:

1 Kings 8:51 For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron:

1 Kings 8:52 That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee.

1 Kings 8:53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our

fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.

Q: Why did the Israelites pray toward the Temple?

A: The Temple was more than a building; it was the dwelling place of God. His presence was symbolically pictured in the Most Holy, where the Ark of the Covenant resided. Later, after the Temple was destroyed, the people did the next best thing by facing in the direction of Jerusalem when they prayed.

Comment: The Apostle Paul said with regard to the Christian, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in *heavenly places* in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

Reply: The Christian is in a different situation altogether. In speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus said that after the Millennium, prayers would be directed heavenward, and Jerusalem would not be the focal point (John 4:21). When mankind is completely restored and all are kings, fully schooled in righteousness, prayers will be directed heavenward in a more physical sense in most cases. Nevertheless, it was good schooling in orderliness and decorum for the Jews back there to pray toward the Temple.

1 Kings 8:54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.

1 Kings 8:55 And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,

1 Kings 8:56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

1 Kings 8:57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:

1 Kings 8:58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

1 Kings 8:59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require:

1 Kings 8:60 That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.

1 Kings 8:61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

Verses 56-61 were like a postscript or benediction after Solomon and the people got up off their knees. Solomon’s heart was right at this time. How he fell later is a very solemn lesson.

1 Kings 8:62 And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.

1 Kings 8:63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the

LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.

1 Kings 8:64 The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that was before the LORD was too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

The peace offerings consisted of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. At first, this tremendous number might seem like a waste, but it was not, for all the people ate of the animals, and the priests got a portion to eat and then stored the rest for future use. The priesthood would have been very busy preparing the animals. Thus, after Solomon's prayer, the balance of the day was involved in preparing and offering these sacrifices.

The feast was like the inauguration of a king in another country. Such feasts often lasted a week, and the poor people of the land were invited to the palace for food and merriment.

Q: Additional details are supplied in 2 Chronicles 7:1-3. "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." At what point did God's glory fill the Temple? Was it after the burnt offerings were consumed by fire or earlier?

A: First, the glory filled the Temple. Then Solomon uttered his prayer. After the prayer ended, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings. When the fire came down, all the people bowed down with their faces on the pavement and worshipped. Incidentally, the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple were dedicated in the past, and Ezekiel's Temple will be dedicated in the future.

1 Kings 8:65 And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days.

1 Kings 8:66 On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

The Feast of Tabernacles started on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. The feast lasted for seven days and then for an additional seven days on this special occasion, for a total of 14 days. (Normally the feast was only seven days long.) The "eighth day" occurred after the *first* week, for "on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he [Solomon] sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shown unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people" (2 Chron. 7:10). In other words, on the eighth day, which was the twenty-third day, Solomon "sent the people away into their tents." At that time, at the end of the first week, those who had to go home for various reasons could do so, for they had fulfilled their week, as required by the Law. Then the second period of seven days extended to the end of the month, and those who could, stayed on. Even for those who returned home, the "national holiday" continued.

The Brazen Altar was not sufficient for all the offerings, so Solomon hallowed a section of the court and made a giant altar just for that occasion. “Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the brasen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, and the meat offerings, and the fat” (2 Chron. 7:7).

Q: Where was Hamath?

A: At that time, Hamath was way up north at the northern extremity of Israel.

1 Kings 9:1 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king’s house, and all Solomon’s desire which he was pleased to do,

1 Kings 9:2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon.

1 Kings 9:3 And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

1 Kings 9:4 And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:

1 Kings 9:5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.

Earlier God had appeared to Solomon in a dream (1 Kings 3:5). Now God appeared the second time in the same manner (“as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon”).

Comment: As stated in 1 Kings 6:37–7:1, it took seven years to build the Temple, but the foundation was not laid until the fourth year of Solomon’s reign. Hence it was 11 years (4 + 7) into his reign when the Temple was finished. Then it took 13 additional years to build his own house, or a total of 24 years (11 + 13). It was now the twenty-fourth year of Solomon’s reign; that is, more than half of his reign had expired.

Not only would the Lord’s eyes be on the Temple, which He had accepted and consecrated, but also His heart would be in Jerusalem in a special sense in connection with the Temple being the meeting place between Himself and man. In the antitype in the next age, the spiritual house, or Temple class (under Jesus), will be the Mediator between God and man.

Comment: God said that His eyes and heart would be on the Temple perpetually, but the condition was that Solomon and his children had to be faithful. Then the lineage through Solomon would sit on the throne until the coming of Messiah.

Reply: Yes. If disobedience occurred, the situation would change—not in regard to the Lord’s feelings toward David but in the perpetuity of the blessing of favor through Solomon.

1 Kings 9:6 But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them:

1 Kings 9:7 Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:

1 Kings 9:8 And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?

1 Kings 9:9 And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

Whether the relationship with Solomon and his posterity would continue indefinitely was predicated on the condition of their obedience. Instead of “And at this house, which is high,” the Revised Standard has a better translation, which shows disfavor; namely, “And this house will become a *heap of ruins*.” The house would be condemned in a conspicuous fashion, not be exalted in a high place.

Comment: God foreknew both here and back in Leviticus 26 that disobedience would occur.

Reply: Evidently, as reflected in his prayer, Solomon remembered what Moses had predicted. Although he could not control the behavior of his posterity, if Solomon had carefully continued to remember, he could at least have been faithful himself and had greater influence over his immediate heirs. Then he would have prevented some of the stigma that attached to him.

1 Kings 9:10 And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king’s house,

1 Kings 9:11 (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.

1 Kings 9:12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not.

1 Kings 9:13 And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.

1 Kings 9:14 And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.

Solomon gave 20 cities in the land of Galilee to Hiram, the king of Tyre. The name Cabul has the thought of desert, barren, and useless. Hiram was displeased and disappointed with the cities for that reason. After all, he had furnished Solomon with great resources of labor and materials for the Temple, and the 20 cities were not an adequate return.

At that time, the nation of Israel included Lebanon, and Tyre and Sidon were famous seaports. Therefore, Hiram of Tyre was under Israel’s control. Similarly with the Roman Empire, large territories were conquered, and the Romans allowed a measure of liberty from servitude and even from taxation depending on the attitude of the people in the cities. Tyre and Sidon were under Hiram, but they had to pay a levy, or tax, of 120 talents of gold as a subsidy for the government of Solomon, who wanted to build a navy and other things.

Hiram called Solomon “my brother” out of respect for David, the father with whom he had

had a close affinity. Also, had Hiram tried to sever the relationship, Solomon could have put pressure on Hiram's control of Tyre and Sidon.

Solomon succumbed to his inherent character weaknesses: wealth, horses, and women. While he did not purpose to fall in these areas, the fact that he did not resist the bargaining attitude in his makeup resulted in his yielding to temptations. With a business sense and a desire for wealth, Solomon gave Hiram less than was deserved. Solomon had his own benefit more in mind than fair-and-square dealings with others.

1 Kings 9:15 And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.

1 Kings 9:16 For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.

1 Kings 9:17 And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether,

1 Kings 9:18 And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,

1 Kings 9:19 And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

1 Kings 9:20 And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel,

1 Kings 9:21 Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day.

1 Kings 9:22 But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.

1 Kings 9:23 These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.

Solomon's building works were extensive, as were those of Herod the Great many years later. Solomon did not levy a tribute on the Israelites *at this time*, but later in his reign, he did. As he got more and more involved in these works and needed more and more money, his character began to change. This was a weakness he needed to fight all his life. Because of other qualities, he was retrieved to some extent, but certainly he did not end up in David's category, whose will was always foremost in trying to please the Lord. Also, David made adequate repentance, and retribution was forced upon him that made him, in some respects, live a sad life in spite of his being king.

Q: Was David somewhat responsible for the disobedience of his children?

A: David was a man of war, preparing for a kingdom. First, he established a capital in Hebron in southern Israel, but he wanted to unify the nation. The very fact that so much of his time was preoccupied with the burdens of state and preparation for the building of the Temple

perhaps kept him from having as much control over his children as he might otherwise have had. In Samuel's case, the disobedience of his children was even more severe. Sometimes, therefore, the problem is not parental guidance but the inherent weaknesses of the progeny themselves. Genes are inherited from both the paternal and the maternal side, so characteristics that develop into problems can emerge from grandparents, great grandparents, etc.

To ensure peace between Egypt and Israel (and vice versa), Solomon agreed to intermarriage with Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon was a wise politician, but that characteristic can be dangerous—and was in this case. (That trait is incompatible with being a Christian because it usually compromises principle.) The tendency for a sovereign of a nation was to keep on good terms with foreign lands by arranging intermarriage as an expediency. Both nations were happy with the arrangement, for each king thought his relative would be a spy over the other nation, thus preventing a secret plot to overthrow the government. Moreover, hostage taking could be done if necessary. From a worldly standpoint, this policy was considered very wise. Years later, in the Book of Proverbs, Solomon reflected on his mistakes and tried to warn others lest they act similarly and adversely affect their relationship with the Lord.

Some of the children of the five peoples, or tribes, that were listed under the broad category of Canaanites were still in the land of Israel. These tribes were not utterly destroyed previously, but they were brought under servitude. In the Kingdom, the human race will come out of their graves with the same characteristics they had in the present life. In other words, they will come out unregenerate and have to obey the rules of the Kingdom. A weeding-out process will occur with those who refuse to submit. Thus there is a subtle foreshadowing here as to some of the problems of the Kingdom Age and some of the reasons why eventually not all will get everlasting life.

The Israelites had to perform military service, but they did not have to pay taxes. When they served in the army, they were given positions of prestige; they were made overseers, for example. Solomon was a worldly-wise businessman with great talents and capabilities, but worldly wisdom is very subtle. As Jesus said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!... It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:23,25). Therefore, if any who are rich make their calling and election sure, no one will begrudge their getting more of a reward than those who are of lesser talents because those very talents are an encumbrance, a difficulty, and a hurdle that have to be surmounted.

Q: 2 Chronicles 8:2 speaks of "the cities which Hiram [Hiram] had restored to Solomon." Are these the same 20 cities that Solomon had given him?

A: We think so. Hiram was so dissatisfied with the cities that he returned them to Solomon. We assume that he died before Solomon's reign expired, for he was from David's generation. Hiram may not have had a successor as capable as himself.

1 Kings 9:24 But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her: then did he build Millo.

1 Kings 9:25 And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.

1 Kings 9:26 And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom.

1 Kings 9:27 And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.

1 Kings 9:28 And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

Pharaoh's daughter, whom Solomon had married, left the City of David and went to the house the king had built for her on the hillside adjoining Jerusalem proper. The Scriptures give the design of Solomon's own elaborate residence. As far as possible, he made a copy of that residence and put it in a different location for Pharaoh's daughter so that she would be in a commodious palace.

Q: Solomon had many wives. Did he build a house for each one?

A: No. Solomon specially favored Pharaoh's daughter, for Egypt was a powerful country at that time. Hence she was a valuable asset to the nation of Israel.

It was about this time—a little over halfway through his reign—that Solomon started to go astray. Earlier he was preoccupied with the building of the Temple. When the Temple was finished, he wanted to solidify his realm, so he built chariots for defense purposes, storehouses to withstand a siege, etc. He had plans to fortify the nation in the event of an attack. When he began to think of political alliances, other problems occurred.

Comment: In marrying Pharaoh's daughter, Solomon forgot the lesson of the Israelites' servitude in Egypt, the "furnace of iron" (1 Kings 8:51).

Reply: Yes, Solomon was familiar with the account, but he forgot because he was involved in other things. It is like the truth itself. One is never so solid in the truth that he cannot be moved if his heart goes astray. Then other things will go astray too.

Comment: Even by us, a temptation could be interpreted as a providence.

Reply: Yes. Prosperity, numbers, and growth can all seem to be God's providence, but they have to be carefully analyzed in harmony with Scripture.

Solomon made a contract with Hiram to build a navy of ships. He wanted to have an outlet at Eilat, which was at the head of the Red Sea, so that his ships could go around Arabia and into the East. Of course Israel also had a long coast on the Mediterranean Sea, so commerce could come from and go to the West. But in addition, he developed the back door to Israel in order to exploit the commodities from the East. We can see how broad Solomon's mind was. For example, he wrote 3,000 proverbs, but his immense capabilities became a problem as time went on.

This northern tip of what used to be the Gulf of Eilat is called Eloth in verse 26. "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom." Today, with the country of Jordan extending down to that same area, Aqaba is a little Jordanian seashore resort that is located on that same northern tip of the Red Sea, or the Gulf of Aqaba, only about 1 1/2 miles away from Eilat.

In short, Solomon's aim was to bring in produce by sea. For example, gold—420 talents, to be exact—was brought from Ophir in Turkey down to Israel. In rough figures, one talent weighed 100 pounds, so we can imagine the weight and value of the transported gold. Incidentally, we feel that Bible maps incorrectly locate Ophir. Just as the Garden of Eden and Noah's Ark are in

Turkey, so Ophir, the “place of gold,” is in the same land. Solomon’s ships went up the Persian Gulf and then followed a river as far as they could go. From there, a land expedition secured the gold and brought it down to the waiting ships with minimal exploitation. If the gold had been transported solely by a land route, hostile territory would have been a problem. Many etymological clues help identify the location of Ophir.

1 Kings 10:1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

1 Kings 10:2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

1 Kings 10:3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

1 Kings 10:4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon’s wisdom, and the house that he had built,

1 Kings 10:5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of King Solomon, she came from Ethiopia to “prove” him; that is, she came to *test* his wisdom by asking some “hard questions.” Under normal circumstances, the puzzling questions would be very difficult to explain, but when she put these forth to him, he was able to answer *every single one*. What was the result? “There was no more spirit in her.” The suggestion is that she had plenty of spirit when she came. The very fact she could propose these questions shows she was above average in her thinking.

Comment: The queen of Sheba came a long distance by camel and on foot. Thus she expended much effort in order to prove Solomon with hard questions.

Reply: Yes. Traditionally she came from Ethiopia, and in the Egyptian historical records, the queen of Sheba was Queen Hatshepsut.

In addition to noticing Solomon’s wisdom with regard to parables and hard sayings, the queen of Sheba looked at the whole setup of Jerusalem: the Temple, the city, the king’s own private residence, the dress and behavior of his household servants, the luxurious settings of food, etc. All this left her dumbfounded. When she beheld these things with her eyes, her words were, “The half was not told me” (verse 7). This is where the famous saying came from—“The half was never told”—which is the chorus of a hymn.

We feel this way when we come to Jesus, the antitypical Solomon, whose wisdom and understanding can answer *all* questions. We are amazed at his sayings, life, and conduct. Of course there are other aspects of Jesus as well, for all we know about is the *man* Christ Jesus, who lived here on earth, as recorded in the Gospels. Just before his crucifixion, Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions.... I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2,3). We are completely unaware of Jesus’ background in the heavenly realm. We believe that the beauty of such a residence—with the gardens, etc., of the spiritual inheritance—far surpasses anything down here.

Comment: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the

things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

Reply: But God has revealed them in the sense that He tells us about them, even though we do not fully grasp them. By faith, we get a glimmer of what they might be. The Old Testament counterpart reads, “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him” (Isa. 64:4).

Comment: The name Sheba means “oath,” “covenant,” and “seven.”

Solomon’s “ascent” pertains to the stairs from his residence in Jerusalem up to the Temple. Where the Dome of the Rock is today was the site of Solomon’s Temple, and the king’s residence was to the south. As one left the Temple Mount to go to Solomon’s residence, he went down a high ridge, which is called Mount Ophel. Water from the Temple Mount flowed by gravity down to the king’s gardens below, where Solomon’s residence was. If a person down there looked up at the Temple, the beauty was awesome. That beauty so struck Queen Hatshepsut that she subsequently tried to emulate it in a certain way by having her famous Egyptian architect build her mortuary temple in the Thebes-Luxor area. That site has been a marvel of Egypt, but as impressive as it is, Solomon’s Temple was far more impressive. However, we can get some idea of the magnificence of that structure by looking at the features and steps of Queen Hatshepsut’s mortuary temple.

Comment: Jesus said, “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here” (Matt. 12:42).

Reply: Yes, she will condemn the generation of Jews at the First Advent who rejected Jesus. She represents the Bride of Christ. For the most part, God calls the meek and humble in this life—those who have a hunger for truth, like the queen of Sheba. When she heard tales about Solomon, she just had to exert the effort of the long journey to see for herself. And so we first heard a little about Jesus, and then we pursued further to see if there was truth in what we had heard. (The true Christian is elated about the peace of soul he has and wants to tell the story to others.) The queen of Sheba was a *foreigner* to Israel, but Jesus used her as an example for having come *all that way*, from the ends of the earth, to hear Solomon. Jesus berated his people because he, a *greater than Solomon*, was *right in their presence*, yet as a whole, they did not recognize him or have that hunger. As a nation, the Jews did not receive Jesus, but to as many as did receive him was given the privilege of becoming the sons of God and the possibility of inheriting the divine nature (John 1:11,12).

1 Kings 10:6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

1 Kings 10:7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

1 Kings 10:8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

1 Kings 10:9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

1 Kings 10:10 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

Comment: How wonderful that the queen of Sheba gave *God* the credit! Just as she brought spices to Solomon, so the Church brings pleasing incense (praise) to Jesus.

Reply: Yes. Similarly, perfume worth a year's savings was poured on Jesus' head and feet (Mark 14:3; John 12:3).

1 Kings 10:11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.

1 Kings 10:12 And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.

1 Kings 10:13 And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

1 Kings 10:14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

1 Kings 10:15 Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

1 Kings 10:16 And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.

1 Kings 10:17 And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

1 Kings 10:18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

1 Kings 10:19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

Verses 11-19 describe the revenues that came into the possession of King Solomon and the nation. Also, some information is given about his great ivory throne, which was overlaid with gold. Stone lions stood guard at the steps leading up to that throne.

Q: Verse 14 states that 666 talents of gold came to Solomon in one year. That is the number of the man of sin in Revelation 13:18, but what would be the purpose of the number 666 here?

A: The number 666 is a *sacred* number that has been maligned. Similarly, "Antichrist" means opposite Christ, but "anti" can also mean "instead of" Christ. The multiple of six, or 666, which is described in the Book of Revelation as a mysterious number, helps to identify the symbolic man of sin as the pope or Papacy, a *false* religion. The Scriptures emphatically say, "Call no man your father [in a spiritual sense] upon the earth" (Matt. 23:9). The priests are called "father," and the word "pope" means "father of fathers." The entire system is misleading. Some of the decrees that have been uttered down through history are blasphemous. Pope Martin, for

example, claimed to be like God. To the contrary, Jesus said of his followers including the apostles, “All ye are *brethren*” (Matt. 23:8).

Thus the holy number 666 has been besmirched by the false Christ, who assumed blasphemous prerogatives and titles such as *Vicarius Filii Dei*, meaning “Vicar (Substitute) of the Son of God”; that is, the pope presumes to be in Christ’s stead. Jesus said, “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). The Christian communicates with God in prayer through Christ, not through a priest or any other agency.

1 Kings 10:20 And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.

1 Kings 10:21 And all king Solomon’s drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

1 Kings 10:22 For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

1 Kings 10:23 So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

1 Kings 10:24 And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

1 Kings 10:25 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

Comment: Solomon is a picture of Christ in the Kingdom, for all the earth sought to hear his wisdom and brought presents.

Reply: Of course in the present age, the Christian brings the present of himself.

Q: What does the gold represent spiritually?

A: Psalm 50:10 says that “the cattle upon a thousand hills” are the Lord’s. God has the universe, so what can we give Him that He does not have? We bring Him the treasure of our heart—just as the wise men who followed the star to Bethlehem gave gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the young child Jesus. The gold was a symbol of obedience; hence the best gift we can give is our heart, ourself—obedience in reverence and respect.

1 Kings 10:26 And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.

1 Kings 10:27 And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.

Solomon had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen. Why were there so many horsemen?

Comment: The disparity in the numbers occurred because multiple horsemen drove each chariot, and there had to be reserves.

Reply: Yes, and that was especially true if they traveled in “stagecoach fashion” where the horses had to be refreshed. Thus there were about nine men per chariot, particularly in the towns of northern Israel where the chariots were used.

Comment: Deuteronomy 17:16,17 stated that the king was not to multiply horses to himself or cause the people to return to Egypt for that purpose. Neither was he to multiply wives or silver and gold to himself lest his heart be turned away.

Reply: Yes, the Law forbid the multiplication of horses (especially from Egypt), wives, silver, and gold. Solomon disobeyed all four explicit instructions. Despite his *great* wisdom and earlier sincerity and good heart condition, Solomon went astray. In fact, he *boldly* disobeyed by putting horses right under the Temple, right under the nose of the Lord, as it were. As time went on, Solomon deemed it expedient to do this and expedient to do that. In the antitype, worldly methods and philosophy can destroy a true Christian. A person may be extremely talented, but the talents are meaningless if he does not hearken to Scripture.

Solomon had much silver and many cedar trees. As here, horses can represent *worldly* doctrines, ideas, methods, procedures, and reasoning. Egypt is a symbol of the *world* and, in some places, the *worldly* Church.

1 Kings 10:28 And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king’s merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

1 Kings 10:29 And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

Horses and linen were brought from Egypt. Apparently, Solomon had a good rapport with Egypt, so he acted as a go-between not only in acquiring wealth for himself but also in supplying commodities to Syria and the Hittite kings. For Egypt to transport goods to other countries, its merchants had to go through Israel, and evidently, Solomon got commissions on the goods; hence he took advantage of the fact that he was in this buffer zone.

1 Kings 11:1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;

1 Kings 11:2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines for a total of 1,000. Moreover, many of these wives were of foreign extraction, whereas the Israelites were instructed to marry other Israelites—and even within each tribe if possible. “The LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them [those of foreign nations], neither shall they come in unto you.” The danger was that the Israelites’ hearts would go “after their [heathen] gods.”

Evidently, Solomon had a good memory to be able to remember the names of all his wives and concubines, as proven by his writing 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 odes or songs (1 Kings 4:32). Being a prolific writer and having knowledge about nature, he was very wise, but he forgot the

most important thing: Scripture. What happened to Solomon tells us not only how one can change but also the following:

1. The greater the number of talents one possesses, the greater the danger of pride. Of course Satan targets such individuals and tries harder to derail them because if he is successful, he affects not only the leader but also those who are led.
2. Money, fame, etc., bring great temptation.
3. Much time had elapsed. Temple construction began in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and seven years were required to finish the structure. Then it took 13 additional years to build his personal residence. By this time, 24 years of Solomon's 40-year reign had expired. Then more years passed for all these marriages to take place, so it would now be near the end of his reign. Incidentally, with so many marriages, he had a *small* number of children.

A radical change took place in Solomon over the 40 years of his reign. And that can be true of the Christian walk as well. We are in a *marathon* race. In 40 years, many fall away, especially toward the end of their walk, and others lose some of their zeal.

The change in Solomon started with commerce, but with the business relationships came a closer and closer rapport that resulted in character deterioration. Of course the Christian has to work in the world to earn a living and hence has communion with the unconsecrated. However, he has to be careful and watchful lest the friendship of fellow workers corrupt him.

Next we will discuss what Solomon's life does and does not represent from a prophetic standpoint. In some pictures, Solomon represents The (glorified) Christ. In other pictures, he represents the nominal Church, which got sullied. Hence we are alerted to dangers that face those who are called to be of the Temple class. Nominal Christians *far outnumber* true Christians, as pictured by Solomon's having 700 wives and princesses and 300 concubines, who were servants of another order. The representation cannot be the Little Flock and the Great Company because there were more wives than concubines. Therefore, if this picture has an antitypical significance, it refers to the nominal Church, which grew in numbers, wealth, politics, intermarriage, and defilement with women (denominationalism). This corruption happened because, like Solomon, the nominal Church did not closely heed the instructions in Scripture. The defilement was due to a lack of familiarity with God's Word.

One might ask, How could a man with such wisdom and talents not know the Lord's instructions? What turned such a wise man in the opposite direction—one who originally knew the Scriptures and the dangers? There were several factors.

1. His wives occupied his time and attention with their demands—in his making preparations for them and extending courtesies. What was left of the day for Solomon personally, after all of his duties, was very meager. In later life, he got more and more entangled in earthly pursuits.
2. Flattery was another factor, for "all the earth" sought wisdom from Solomon and brought him presents of gold, silver, horses, and other valuable commodities (1 Kings 10:24,25). Because of his great wisdom, Solomon is mentioned under variant spellings in the religious history of Persia, Turkey, and Egypt. Even Jesus gave tacit recognition to Solomon's wisdom (Matt. 12:42). Solomon was a very unusual person.

Because of his deflection, it is unlikely that Solomon will have any special reward in the Kingdom. The Book of Ecclesiastes contains some evidence of his repentance, but not in the way that David repented. In the Psalms, David confessed his sins openly to the whole nation.

Solomon, in his own way, may have been repenting in the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, where he gave the advice of an old man who had fallen and was trying to help younger people.

3. “Evil communications corrupt good manners [conduct]” (1 Cor. 15:33). Solomon’s foreign wives turned his heart away from the true God to heathen gods. The Christian faces the same danger. How radically Solomon changed from his heart condition when he uttered such a humble prayer at the dedication of the Temple! The Lord was pleased with his request for wisdom and blessed him accordingly—but how he changed!

1 Kings 11:4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

1 Kings 11:5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

1 Kings 11:6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.

1 Kings 11:7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

1 Kings 11:8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

Comment: The fact that Solomon went after *multiple* false gods through his wives shows the depth of his degradation.

Solomon built a palace for Pharaoh’s daughter opposite the lower city of Jerusalem and now a “high place” for the god Chemosh, both of which entailed tremendous construction work. Solomon probably reasoned, “To preserve and secure a long-lasting peace, I will ceremonially marry women of surrounding nations,” but he was using *worldly* philosophy. The relationships became an *affection*, for he “clave unto these in love” (verse 2). The marriages may have been political to start with, but then he loved the wives; that is, the relationships became *fleshly* with a number of his wives. This affection led to making homes for those wives and then even building high places of worship and idols for their false gods. Finally Solomon himself participated in the false worship services. He rationalized his conduct in trying to be all things to all men, but there is a *danger* in trying to please everybody. Evidently, he did not leave the Lord in the sense of not sacrificing, for he continued with the ceremonial features of the Law, participating in the proper manner for a king. The result was *confusion*, for he worshipped false gods at the same time. “Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went *not fully* after the LORD, as did David his father” (verse 6). He had “a *form* of godliness” but *denied* “the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5). Solomon did not deny the Lord, but he did not properly serve Him.

Comment: Jesus stated the *principle* in his message to the church of Laodicea: “So then because thou art *lukewarm*, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16).

Thus Solomon built places for the worship of the heathen gods that are named. Some of the gods were the same; they just had different names for the different peoples in the surrounding nations. And Solomon “burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.”

1 Kings 11:9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

1 Kings 11:10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

1 Kings 11:11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

1 Kings 11:12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

1 Kings 11:13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

The Lord appeared to Solomon the third time in a vision, or dream. Solomon did not realize what a *tremendous honor* it was to have had such a *personal communication* the first two times. The first communication was approval plus admonition, the second time was just admonition. Now God was angry with Solomon because "his heart was turned."

For David's sake, God would not rend the kingdom away from Solomon, but in his son's day, the kingdom was divided, with only one tribe going to Rehoboam. God was saying to Solomon in effect, "Because of what you have done, I am going to rend [cut] the kingdom and leave only one tribe to your son, in addition to Judah [David's tribe]." The one tribe would be Benjamin. The remaining ten tribes, which would be cut off to become a separate kingdom, would be given to one of Solomon's servants, namely, Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (see verse 26). Later the separate kingdoms became known as Israel (the ten-tribe kingdom) and Judah (the two-tribe kingdom).

Comment: Here was Solomon's opportunity to repent right then and there in sackcloth and ashes, but he did not do so.

Reply: Yes, the very fact God communicated with Solomon and scolded him meant that he should have fallen down and humbled himself.

Comment: Solomon was told in advance that the bulk of the kingdom would go to a *servant*.

1 Kings 11:14 And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom.

1 Kings 11:15 For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom;

1 Kings 11:16 (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:)

1 Kings 11:17 That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child.

1 Kings 11:18 And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land.

1 Kings 11:19 And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen.

1 Kings 11:20 And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.

1 Kings 11:21 And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country.

1 Kings 11:22 Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise.

God stirred up an enemy of Solomon named Hadad, who was an Edomite of the king's seed. The account gives the background of Hadad, telling how he became an enemy. When he was a young boy, he was assisted in a flight that ended in Egypt, where he grew up having the favor of the Pharaoh. In time, as the darling of the Pharaoh, he was given the queen's sister for a wife. Meanwhile, Solomon had a reign of peace, but now he was an old man.

More than 40 years earlier under Joab, King David's captain, all males in Edom were slain, but the young boy Hadad escaped to Egypt at that time. Years later, when he heard that David was dead, Hadad returned to Edom, his homeland, having hatred in his heart for what had been done to his people and wanting revenge. In other words, while Solomon was reigning in peace, events were occurring that were not obvious for a while. The groundwork was being laid for enemies to develop, and Hadad would cause problems as time went on. Of course Hadad's thought of returning to Edom percolated and came to fruition at the right time for an enemy of Solomon to be stirred up.

It is interesting that when Hadad wanted to return to Edom and spoke to Pharaoh about the matter, the latter said, "Haven't I done enough for you? Haven't I been like a father to you? Why do you want to return to your homeland?" But Hadad would not be dissuaded from his purpose of seeking revenge.

1 Kings 11:23 And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah:

1 Kings 11:24 And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus.

1 Kings 11:25 And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

In the final analysis, Hadad did not go back to Edom but ended up in Damascus with Rezon, who had fled from Zobah when David led a slaughter there in the past. In Edom, with all the males having been slain years before, there was not much for Hadad to work with. In fact, even today, at this late date, the land on the eastern side of the Dead Sea is very rich for crops and cattle, but few people live there. What happened in David's day really decimated the country.

There is no record of battles being fought during Solomon's reign, but there were problems,

nevertheless, for a person can be a thorn in various ways, for example, through false reports and slander, politics, and commerce. Accordingly, Hadad (associated with Edom) and Rezon (associated with Zobah) harassed King Solomon, and Jeroboam would also become a problem. Thus these three individuals caused trouble after Solomon's death. The hatred of both Hadad and Rezon began in David's reign, so they harbored a resentment of Israel for many years. This background history would affect much of the time period covered henceforth in the Book of 1 Kings—with Rehoboam and beyond.

1 Kings 11:26 And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king.

1 Kings 11:27 And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.

1 Kings 11:28 And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

1 Kings 11:29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field:

1 Kings 11:30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:

1 Kings 11:31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

1 Kings 11:32 (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)

Verses 26-32 give Jeroboam's background story. As a young man of valor, he was engaged in the work of extending the plateau on which Jerusalem was built, particularly the Temple area. That fill-in area was called Millo. Subsequently Solomon made Jeroboam the overseer of the "house of Joseph," the northern ten tribes, which included Ephraim and Manasseh. In time, Jeroboam would be made king over the ten tribes, so now he had an opportunity to develop a rapport with the house of Joseph, the whole northern portion of Israel. Ephraim and Manasseh had so many inhabitants that they far outnumbered the other eight tribes in northern Israel. In fact, Ephraim was so populous that all ten tribes were later called by that name. In addition, Ephraim occupied a strategic location.

Q: How did the Israelites know who the prophets were?

A: Back there when the Holy Spirit operated on an individual, he was so zealous that others knew he was being moved by a supernatural power.

One day when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem wearing a new garment, Ahijah the prophet caught hold of that garment and used a sword to cut it into 12 pieces. With a piece for each tribe, Ahijah acted out the prophecy that Jeroboam would get ten of the tribes. It was apparent to Jeroboam that the Holy Spirit was operating on Ahijah to cause him to speak and act mechanically. Moreover, Jeroboam realized that symbolism was involved.

1 Kings 11:33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.

1 Kings 11:34 Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes:

1 Kings 11:35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.

1 Kings 11:36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

1 Kings 11:37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

1 Kings 11:38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

1 Kings 11:39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

Most of verses 33-39 is self-explanatory. God said to Jeroboam through Ahijah, "If you obey me and are faithful, I will do the same thing for you that I did for David. You will be able to keep the ten tribes until Messiah comes at the First Advent."

1 Kings 11:40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

1 Kings 11:41 And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

1 Kings 11:42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.

1 Kings 11:43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

Solomon reigned for 40 years and died. Then his son Rehoboam began to reign. There was another "book of the acts of Solomon," for other nations had histories of his life.

Notice the contrast. David waited on the *Lord's* due time for deposing Saul, whereas Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam. Solomon's presumptuous act shows his wrong heart condition toward one whom the Lord approved. Hence Saul and Solomon had similar evil traits. God had told Solomon what would happen with regard to his son and Jeroboam, and now Solomon was resisting the Lord's providence.

Comment: There was not much time for Solomon to repent, for the evil acts seemed to continue almost to the end of his life.

1 Kings 12:1 And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

After Solomon's decease, his son Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all Israel had come to make him king.

Comment: Subsequent verses show that the kingdom would not have been divided if Rehoboam had acted properly, but of course God, who knows the end from the beginning, knew that the kingdom would be rent.

Reply: The ten tribes were originally sympathetic to Rehoboam and hoped for a change, for a better and lighter system of taxation. Earlier Ahijah the prophet had cut Jeroboam's new garment into 12 pieces and said he would get ten tribes; that is, ten tribes would go to the house of Joseph, and two tribes would go to the house of David.

Q: Why did Rehoboam go to Shechem instead of Jerusalem to be made king?

A: Rehoboam should have followed tradition; there was no reason for him not to be anointed in Jerusalem. David had moved the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem, which was a more central location where the tribes could assemble for special feasts and holidays. For Rehoboam to accept Shechem as the place for his coronation was unusual. Because different translators were involved in the King James Version, Shechem is sometimes spelled Sychem (Acts 7:16).

1 Kings 12:2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;)

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was in exile in Egypt. The fact the Egyptians had accepted him and given him quarters showed they were agreeable to his being there, but what was his background?

Comment: Jeroboam had been a servant of Solomon and in that capacity was recognized as being especially industrious. Hence Solomon put him in charge of a building project. Subsequently Ahijah the prophet said that the kingdom would be divided and that ten tribes would be given to Jeroboam. When Solomon heard of the prophecy, Jeroboam had to flee.

Reply: Yes, Jeroboam fled to Egypt, but when Solomon died, he felt conditions in Israel might be acceptable for his return.

1 Kings 12:3 That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

1 Kings 12:4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

Prior to fleeing to Egypt, Jeroboam was set as the overseer of the "house of Joseph." At that time, he fraternized with the tribes in northern Israel. Joseph's sons were Ephraim and Manasseh, and the tribes of those names were the most populous in northern Israel. In fact, Moses referred to "the ten thousands of Ephraim, and ... the thousands of Manasseh" (Deut. 33:17). Because of their numbers, these two tribes were very influential. Therefore, the pronoun "they" in verse 3 probably refers to Ephraim and Manasseh, who now, years later,

sent and called for Jeroboam to leave Egypt. They had friendly thoughts toward him and wanted him to return to Israel now that Solomon had died.

When Jeroboam arrived, he and “all the congregation of Israel” went to Rehoboam in Shechem in connection with the coronation ceremony. While there, they made the following request or proposition. “Ease the heavy yoke that your father put on us, and we will serve you. We are happy that you will be king, but we would appreciate your making a change from the former administration.” Solomon had heavily taxed and conscripted men for his building projects, including houses for his wives and concubines, and Jeroboam and the people wanted this burden to be eased.

1 Kings 12:5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

Rehoboam said, “Give me some time to think about your request. Leave me alone for three days, and then I will respond when you come back.”

1 Kings 12:6 And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

1 Kings 12:7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

First, Rehoboam consulted the *older* men, who were contemporaries of Solomon and had served him. Their advice was, “Listen to what the people have said. If you ease their burdens and make them *lighter*, you will solidify and unify the government and nation unto yourself.”

1 Kings 12:8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

1 Kings 12:9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

The implication is that Rehoboam, being young himself, was predisposed to listen to the *young* men, his peers and companions, who were there with him, having accompanied him from Jerusalem to Shechem. Rehoboam asked the young men if the yoke should be lightened.

1 Kings 12:10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s loins.

1 Kings 12:11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

The young men counseled, “Make the burdens *heavier* than they were under your father.” The young men might have understood a little of the conditions that had existed earlier, but why did they respond with this type of advice, which was just the *opposite* of the counsel of the old men? They were saying, “Do not listen to the demands of the ten tribes. Increase their burdens.”

Comment: These young men had grown up with Rehoboam and were his personal friends. If

Rehoboam took in more revenue and got more power, they hoped he would share the wealth with them and give them powerful government positions to carry out the program.

Reply: Yes, they had selfish ulterior motives. Their advice was a form of flattery, for they hoped to be rewarded for their counsel. Accordingly, they framed the words for Rehoboam's reply: "My little finger will be thicker than my father's thigh. He put a heavy yoke on you, but I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

Q: Were "scorpions" leather whips with metal pieces on the ends of the strands?

A: They may well have been. In the days of the Roman Empire, as experienced by both Jesus and the Apostle Paul, little pieces of metal were put on the ends of the whip so that the flesh would be lacerated during a whipping. By this means, the suffering was increased.

1 Kings 12:12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

1 Kings 12:13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

1 Kings 12:14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

1 Kings 12:15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

When Jeroboam and the people came back on the third day, Rehoboam spoke "roughly," giving the reply advised by the young men. Hence he sided with the minority clique that surrounded him and did not hearken to the people. He wanted to rule even more rigorously.

"The cause was from the LORD, that he might perform" what He had spoken by Ahijah the prophet unto Jeroboam regarding the rending of the kingdom into ten and two tribes. Ahijah had said a servant in Solomon's house would govern the ten tribes, and that was about to happen, for Jeroboam was to get the larger portion, the ten tribes. Moreover, a condition was stated; namely, *if* Jeroboam was obedient, the ten tribes would be his forever.

1 Kings 12:16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

Refusing to accept the extra burdens, the people reacted strongly, crying out, "Go away, house of David! Go back to your own people, Rehoboam!" It was natural for them to now turn to Jeroboam to be their leader.

1 Kings 12:17 But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

1 Kings 12:18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to

his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

1 Kings 12:19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

What nerve Rehoboam had! While he was *still in Shechem*, where he had gone for the ceremony that made him king, he sent Adoram, his treasurer, among the people to collect the poll tax right away. When the people stoned Adoram to death, Rehoboam realized the mood of the people—the degree of their rebellion and the danger—and he fled in haste to Jerusalem, in Judah, his own tribe, which would be most sympathetic to him. “Therefore king Rehoboam *made speed* to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.” He should have sensed the conditions and realized that the young men were giving bad advice.

The kingdom remained separated even through the time that the ten tribes were taken into captivity, leaving the two tribes in the land. Judah and Benjamin were not taken into captivity until about 150 years later, in 606 BC. Hence the split was not healed until certain circumstances occurred many years later.

The northern kingdom held this resentment for a long time. It was perpetuated from generation to generation as the details of the split with Rehoboam were told again and again.

1 Kings 12:20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

The ten tribes made Jeroboam their king; that is, they withdrew their support from Judah and Jerusalem and chose a leader to occupy the position of king over the ten tribes. However, in doing this, they *left the promises* that are to come through the Davidic line and the tribe of Judah—not only that a king would be perpetuated in his line but also that Messiah would come of that line, for Jacob had given a deathbed prophecy that “Judah is a lion’s whelp” and that “the sceptre... [and] lawgiver” would not depart from that tribe “until Shiloh [the Peaceable One, the Messiah] come” (Gen. 49:9,10). The tribe of Judah might not have thought too kindly of Rehoboam as an individual, but they realized from a natural standpoint that if they rejected him and followed the ten-tribe kingdom, they might jeopardize this promise of rulership. Hence they maintained support for Rehoboam and backed him up. The territory occupied by the tribe of Judah, the southern half of Israel, was almost as large as the rest of the nation. However, the ten tribes were more densely populated.

Q: What happened to the tribe of Benjamin?

A: Ahijah had indicated in his prophecy to Jeroboam that Benjamin would give allegiance to Judah. Events happened quickly, so perhaps Benjamin was in a quandary and wanted to weigh matters. Saul, the first king of Israel, was from the tribe of Benjamin, and he had allegiance from the ten tribes. Moreover, David’s son Absalom had the affection of the ten tribes. In Jerusalem, and more particularly in Benjamin, there was a background of sympathy with the ten tribes, but the fact that the promises were slanted more to Judah, and that Benjamin was associated with Judah in prophecy, may have swayed that tribe in the final analysis. The Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah would come from Judah. Therefore, if those of Benjamin weighed the matter from a prophetic standpoint, they would cast their lot with Judah.

1 Kings 12:21 And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam

the son of Solomon.

1 Kings 12:22 But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

1 Kings 12:23 Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying,

1 Kings 12:24 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

This time Rehoboam did listen to the Lord. When he gathered 180,000 warriors from Benjamin and Judah to fight and recover the ten tribes, God sent Shemaiah the prophet, who seemed to come out of nowhere with a message for the king: “Do not fight the ten tribes, your brethren, for this division is from me”; that is, the division was *from the Lord*. Shemaiah would have spoken *strongly and powerfully* enough that the people, as well as the king, listened and obeyed; their intentions quieted down momentarily.

Q: How would the people have known that Shemaiah was a true prophet?

A: There was a history behind Shemaiah. Yes, he came out of nowhere, but the people knew him when he appeared at a *crucial* moment just before the chosen warriors began to march. The “book of Shemaiah” is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 12:15, so he was active and would have been respected as a prophet.

Also, when Shemaiah gave this announcement to Rehoboam, he would have selected a spot where the king had other men with him. For example, when the plagues were visited on Egypt, and Moses went in to talk to Pharaoh, other nobles were in attendance at the court. Thus Moses spoke to Pharaoh not in a private consultation but in a throne scene where others were present. The point is that the people of Judah would have known that Shemaiah the prophet had said, “Do not go to war.” As a result, Rehoboam was stopped in his tracks, and the people respected the commandment as coming from the Lord.

It was apparent to the people—somehow—when a prophet of old spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit, when he was bringing a message from the Lord. Notice the language here: “Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is *from me*.” This was tough talk! Because Shemaiah spoke with authority and above his natural demeanor, those who overheard the message knew that it was not his private thinking but a message from the Lord.

In the past, several nations had great respect for seers, and they listened to the advice of such counselors. When it came to making crucial decisions, they frequently turned to a seer, but in this case, Rehoboam did not invite the counsel. Rather, the Lord told the seer to go to him.

1 Kings 12:25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

Jeroboam “built”—that is, enlarged—Shechem and Penuel. Now that he was king, he wanted an appropriate capital for the northern kingdom with larger quarters for himself and those who served him. Incidentally, Penuel is where Jacob wrestled with an angel (Gen. 32:24-31). The Hebrew *pen* or *pan* means “face,” and *uel* means “of God,” that is, the “face of God.”

The New Testament states that the ten-tribe kingdom especially venerated Jacob. John 4:5-12 tells about the woman of Samaria who was at the well when Jesus was resting at noontime. She used the expression “our father Jacob.” “Then cometh he [Jesus] to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.... The woman saith unto him [Jesus], Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?” And she said, “Our fathers worshipped in *this mountain*; and ye say, that [instead] in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship” (John 4:20). Thus the northern kingdom looked to Jacob and Joseph as their fathers. If they looked to David, that would mean looking to Judah, so they bypassed him in their thinking and regarded Jeroboam. This thinking lasted right up to Jesus’ day, even after the ten tribes went into captivity.

1 Kings 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

1 Kings 12:27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

1 Kings 12:28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

1 Kings 12:29 And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.

Jeroboam had been in exile in Egypt, so obviously, he was influenced by the bull worship that existed there. The thinking of the Egyptians had rubbed off on him. We are reminded of the Scripture “evil communications corrupt good manners [conduct]” (1 Cor. 15:33). No matter how strong a person’s will is, if he is in an environment that is dangerous to him as a Christian, he must think of ways to circumvent or change that condition lest it change him in time through little compromises here and there.

Notice how shrewd Jeroboam was in his thinking. He reasoned, “I was made king because the people of the ten tribes were dissatisfied with Rehoboam, but as time passes and the males go to Jerusalem each year for the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, they will become more sympathetic to Judah. They will think about unifying the whole nation, and where will I be when that happens?” Therefore, Jeroboam changed the place of worship for the ten tribes.

In the days of Rehoboam, the nation of Israel was divided. With spiritual Israel, the division was Papacy and Protestantism. Both have the same Bible, and the worshippers are called Christians. From a prophetic standpoint then, the northern kingdom with Jeroboam represents Catholicism because of the greater numbers and the golden bulls (papal decrees). Just as Bethel and Dan were rival places of worship, so Papacy changed the focus from Jerusalem to Rome. Special feasts were held in Rome, not Jerusalem—and in Bethel and Dan, not Jerusalem. Thus the account in 1 Kings 12 is telling in advance that nominal Christendom would be divided into two camps.

Q: At this early point, could the picture, or type, be the division *within* Papacy of Rome and Constantinople?

A: The picture would fit from that perspective and seems to be the better thought. Just as there were two calves, so there were two capitals: Rome and Constantinople. The dragon moved its

seat from Rome to Constantinople and thus gave its seat in Rome to the beast. Under Constantine, Catholicism got a strong hold on the people. Hence this early division of the nation pictures the days of Constantine and what happened in the religious realm. The Adversary was behind the division. Rome is the seat of the beast, whereas Jerusalem is the seat of the true Michael.

Comment: Jeroboam represents the great apostasy, or falling away, of the majority of Christians.

Reply: Jeroboam and the ten tribes *left* Rehoboam and the two tribes. Similarly, Catholicism *strayed from* the nucleus of true Christians. Later the split kingdom took on the aspect of Protestantism and Catholicism.

Comment: Dan was in the north, and Bethel was more to the south of the ten-tribe kingdom. Shechem was in between the two.

The antitype can be extended further with Rehoboam and Jeroboam. The people in the ten tribes would not submit to the extra burdens under Rehoboam, so they chose instead to live an easier life under Jeroboam. In the antitype, the majority of Christians would not submit to the persecutions and sacrifices demanded by true Christianity, so they chose an easier life under the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, which brought the cessation of persecutions from Pagan Rome. Henceforth there began compromises between pagan and papal institutions, priesthoods, etc.

1 Kings 12:30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

It was a sin for the people to worship in Dan and Bethel.

1 Kings 12:31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

1 Kings 12:32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

1 Kings 12:33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

Jeroboam instituted a rival priesthood and rival feast days and centers of worship. Instead of the fifteenth day of the seventh month being the Feast of Tabernacles, he appointed the fifteenth day of the eighth month. Most of the people lived an agricultural lifestyle. To show their fidelity to Jeroboam, they attended this new feast in the eighth month. This meant that they were less disposed to go to Jerusalem for the proper feasts because they needed the time for their crops. The people would not take off a week in two consecutive months.

The same principle has followed down through history—in Constantine's day with Rome and in later stages of the nominal Church to the present day. Catholicism, too, has had its own priesthood and hierarchy (popes, cardinals, bishops, etc.) and has changed times and seasons (Dan. 2:21).

Jeroboam “made priests of the *lowest* of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.” Individuals of other tribes, who were the “lowest” in character, were made priests for reasons other than reverence—money and friendship, for example. *Political* appointments were made for spiritual reasons. It was wrong to establish another priesthood, but at least Jeroboam should have selected priests with proper qualifications.

Jeroboam might have reasoned that he was justified in his actions because Rehoboam was not a fit king. Jeroboam did have the backing of Ahijah the prophet—but *on the condition* that he obey the Lord. Obedience meant that Jerusalem was the place to worship. However, he conveniently forgot what the prophet had told him and instituted his *own* religious practices. Therefore, the kingdom would be taken from him as time went on.

1 Kings 13:1 And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

The ten tribes sided with Jeroboam, whereas the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin were loyal to Rehoboam, Solomon’s son. The nation was cut in two, as it were. Jeroboam had established rival places of worship in Bethel and Dan, thus causing further division, especially on feast days.

Jeroboam was standing by the altar at Bethel to burn incense when a man of God appeared on the scene. Bethel means “house of God,” that is, the nominal house, the nominal Church.

Comment: For Jeroboam, the king, to perform the function of a priest was highly improper. A *Reprint* article suggests that he was the chief priest of this false rival religion.

1 Kings 13:2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee.

The man of God, a prophet, addressed the altar in the name of Jehovah as if it had a personality and could hear him. He pronounced a judgment on the altar; namely, a child would be born to the house of David (hence to the tribe of Judah, the rival kingdom), and his name would be Josiah. This prophecy of good King Josiah was given about 300 years in advance. In fact, the ten tribes would be in Babylonian captivity at that point. Just as with Cyrus, Josiah’s name was given a number of years before his birth. What did Josiah do?

Comment: Josiah rid the land of false worship, high places, and idols. Also, he dug up the corpses of the false priests and burned them.

Reply: Yes, the graves were opened, and their corpses were heaped on the altar. In addition, live priests were slain, and their bodies were offered on the altar. Josiah’s purpose was to defile the false altar. In effect, the land was purified because even false priests were then reluctant to use that altar.

1 Kings 13:3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

At a propitious moment when Jeroboam was standing at the altar to offer incense, this prophet from Judah seemingly appeared out of nowhere and more or less pronounced a curse on the altar and prophesied about a child who would be born. Let us consider Jeroboam’s unfavorable reaction. At first, the prophet’s curse, or judgment, seemed to be a long way off at some future date, for the child had not yet been born and would have to grow up. But as the prophet

continued his message, Jeroboam realized there would also be an immediate sign (“the same day”). The prophet said that the altar would be rent and that the ashes would be poured out.

Details are given in the Kings and Chronicles accounts about Josiah’s reign and the action he took against false worship in the vicinity of Judah and Jerusalem. He went throughout the realm and even purged the ten-tribe kingdom.

1 Kings 13:4 And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

Angry at the prophet’s words, Jeroboam put forth his hand from the altar and gave the order, “Lay hold on him.” Instantly his hand dried up as he pointed toward the prophet. His arm became like a stick, and he could not retract it; that is, his arm froze in an outward position. What great humiliation this was for the king, who would have been dressed in his regal robes! Now he knew that this man was a prophet, for only a prophet could have struck him with this miracle of judgment.

1 Kings 13:5 The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

As prophesied, the altar was rent, and the ashes poured out. The judgment, the destruction, which would have been like a mini-earthquake, was also a sign that a prophet of God was standing before Jeroboam.

1 Kings 13:6 And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Entreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king’s hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

Jeroboam begged for forgiveness and for the restoration of his arm to its normal condition. “Entreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored.” The man of God did so, and the king’s arm was restored.

In view of what had just happened, we are interested to know about Jeroboam’s character. How did he respond to the situation?

1 Kings 13:7 And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

1 Kings 13:8 And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place:

1 Kings 13:9 For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

1 Kings 13:10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.

Up to this point, the prophet was obedient to the original instructions he had been given. Before he went to the king, the Lord had laid down certain instructions. The prophet was not to drink or eat a meal with anyone or to tarry, and he was to return to Judah by a different but direct route as fast as possible. Therefore, when Jeroboam invited him, “Come home with me,

and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward,” the prophet replied, “Even if you will give me half of your kingdom, I will not stay, for my instruction was not to tarry.” It sounded as if Jeroboam was repenting, but that was not the case.

Comment: This account is a reminder of Balaam. At first, he said to the servants of Balak, “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more” (Num. 22:18).

Reply: Yes, there was a flaw in Balaam’s character. Both Balaam and this prophet succumbed eventually, although under different circumstances.

1 Kings 13:11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

1 Kings 13:12 And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah.

1 Kings 13:13 And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass; and he rode thereon,

1 Kings 13:14 And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am.

1 Kings 13:15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

When his sons informed him, an *old* prophet of Bethel told them to saddle an ass for him, and he pursued posthaste after the prophet from Judah, who presumably was traveling by foot. The old prophet overtook the younger prophet from Judah, who was resting, and invited him to return to Bethel and eat with him. This was the same type of invitation that the king had extended.

1 Kings 13:16 And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:

1 Kings 13:17 For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

1 Kings 13:18 He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.

1 Kings 13:19 So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

The younger prophet from Judah said he could not go back to Bethel because of the instruction he had received from the Lord. However, the old prophet persisted, saying that an angel had spoken to him and changed the instructions. “But he [the old prophet] lied unto him.” Either (1) the old prophet lied, or (2) the old prophet really had a vision in which the angel lied. Then, too, the Lord could have instructed the angel to tell the old prophet this story in order to test the prophet from Judah. Or the old prophet could have been so desirous of fellowship that he quickly fabricated an incident to persuade the younger prophet from Judah, who had done such wonderful miracles, to come back with him. The age of the old prophet seems significant. He could have been out of service and hence especially desirous of fellowship, but to lie was

wrong. At any rate, the younger prophet from Judah disobeyed and went back to Bethel, where he ate bread with the old prophet.

Comment: If the angel lied, the incident could fit the antitype of “though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).

Reply: Regardless of who was guilty of deception, that would fit because it is part of the narrative. We cannot tell with certainty who was guilty, but either way the lesson would be very much the same in the antitype.

Later on, the old prophet showed remorse and felt a sense of responsibility with regard to what happened. He retrieved the body of the younger man of God and buried him in his own grave. Hence the old prophet was not evil.

In the first dispensation, the angels committed the same sin as the prophet from Judah. They were sent to earth on a mission, and when that mission was accomplished, they were to return *immediately* to heaven. When they lingered here, they fell, becoming contaminated with sin.

The prophet from Judah had been given *specific* instructions. “Deliver the message, and then return without eating, drinking, or tarrying. Do not let anything distract you.” Sometimes God gives us specific instructions in His Word with regard to what we can and cannot do, and yet we, like the prophet from Judah, may not strictly heed them. When given the instructions, the prophet should have sensed *there would be a test*, for he had gotten a *direct* “thus saith the LORD” to begin with. Then ostensibly another “thus saith the LORD,” *giving the exact opposite advice*, came *indirectly* from a prophet he did not know. He should have realized this was a temptation and refused—period! We may be naive, but being naive can be very dangerous, for we may think one is zealous in service and has a good heart and thus listen to his *wrong* counsel. The prophet from Judah should not have yielded unless the *Lord* told him.

Comment: Since the advice was the *opposite* of what he had first been told, the prophet from Judah should not have listened to the old prophet. And if he had any doubts, this was the age when signs and answers to prayer came in a very definite way, so he could have gone to the Lord again and asked for a sign if the counsel was true. As examples, Gideon and Moses asked for repeated signs.

Reply: Yes, that would be a good response. When we come to a place where it is hard to make a decision, we take the matter to the Lord in prayer.

The Adversary especially strikes when we are tired, hungry, and relaxed. Verse 14 tells that the prophet from Judah was resting when the old prophet found him. He had probably sought shade under the oak tree because he was tired and thirsty.

Comment: Coming from a fellow prophet, this temptation was subtle. In the antitype, tests from our brethren are very difficult. They can catch us unexpectedly and be the source of wrong counsel. We must test everything against the Scriptures.

Reply: There is no question that the test came to the younger prophet from Judah at a most inopportune time. Psychologically he was at a low ebb, but he should have pursued his original instructions. When we prayerfully reason out a matter, it usually becomes very plain that a certain course is wrong. To talk, think, or make judgments emotionally is dangerous.

1 Kings 13:20 And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came

unto the prophet that brought him back:

1 Kings 13:21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee,

1 Kings 13:22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

The two prophets ate together in Bethel. During the meal, the Lord spoke *mechanically* through the old prophet to admonish the younger prophet for his disobedience and tell him he would not get back to Judah.

The old prophet seemed to mean well, but the prophet from Judah had reacted emotionally in returning to Bethel. He should have been more on guard because *he* had received the original instruction. Generally speaking, we cannot enter into someone else's trial with the same degree of *intensity* as the one going through the trial. But if we rationalize, without emotion, that we, as well as the individual, are new creatures, we can then enter the trial in a sympathetic sense. But here the temptation came suddenly on the prophet from Judah.

In any event, this experience was a test, and the Lord can certainly send a messenger to make a statement. However, there is a rationale to the other side of the question as well, for when the Lord tests somebody, He is quite at liberty to use a deceptive message. Such was the case with Micaiah the prophet, and there is nothing morally wrong in doing so.

1 Kings 13:23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

1 Kings 13:24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.

1 Kings 13:25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

Verse 23 shows that the old prophet had a twinge of conscience, so he saddled his own ass for the prophet from Judah to have in returning to his home. En route to Judah, the disobedient prophet was slain by a lion, but the lion did not eat either the body or the ass. The lion and the ass *just stood there* by the carcass. Men who passed by saw this strange phenomenon of the uneaten carcass with the two animals standing nearby, and they noised abroad in Bethel what had happened. Under normal circumstances, the lion would have eaten the carcass, and the ass would have run away in fright.

What might the antitype be for this incident? Many character lessons are forthcoming, but we need to pray for understanding in regard to an antitype.

1 Kings 13:26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him.

1 Kings 13:27 And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him.

1 Kings 13:28 And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass.

1 Kings 13:29 And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him.

1 Kings 13:30 And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother!

1 Kings 13:31 And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones:

1 Kings 13:32 For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

The old prophet had his sons saddle another ass so that he could retrieve the body of the man of God and bury him in his own grave. When burying the prophet from Judah, the old prophet called him “my brother.” Then he gave orders to his sons that when he died, they were to bury him next to the younger prophet from Judah, for the prophecy against the altar in Bethel would come to pass. Thus the old prophet had respect for the younger prophet. Josiah came on the scene at a later date and did the very things that the disobedient prophet had prophesied.

Q: Does Josiah picture Jesus in that case?

A: Yes. Just as Josiah destroyed the altars to Baal, so Jesus will destroy Papacy, trample the winepress, etc.

Comment: By wanting to be buried next to the younger prophet, the old prophet was acknowledging some responsibility for the disobedience and wanted to make amends.

Reply: Yes, the old prophet wanted his bones buried with the other prophet’s bones because he sympathized and recognized his own responsibility in the matter. There is a sadness here with regard to both sides, for there was some goodness in both prophets.

Q: Both prophets had a lapse, but in the final analysis, both seemed to have good hearts and good intentions. Therefore, could this incident show that when Papacy was in control for 1,260 years, there were some truly consecrated individuals who did not make the Little Flock because of some defects and immature, or undeveloped, aspects in their characters? However, they do get life as Great Company. One portion of the Great Company was more distant from Papacy, but neither of the two portions sympathized with that system. Both welcomed the promised destruction of the false religion.

A: The two prophets could represent two classes of the Great Company. Both are the Lord’s, for He does rescue them, but they are not of the caliber of the Little Flock.

Comment: Because of the influence of Papacy, some of the consecrated, as pictured by the two prophets, do not hold to the standard as they should.

Reply: That point could be considered from the standpoint of the two kingdoms: the more populous northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. For a while, the sins of the northern kingdom were worse than those of the southern kingdom; hence the Lord cut off the northern

kingdom first. But actually, both kingdoms had faults, and Judah received judgment in 606 BC.

Comment: The old prophet risked his life in taking the body of the younger prophet away from the lion. That benevolent act manifested a good point in his character. And of course it was commendable that the old prophet took care in even going back to retrieve and bury the body of the prophet from Judah.

Comment: The two prophets could not represent the Little Flock, so it seems likely they picture two aspects of the Great Company.

Reply: It is certainly possible that the Great Company is represented by the two prophets, for those of the Great Company are the Lord's, and He does rescue them. The age difference of the *old* prophet versus the *younger* prophet is probably significant in the antitype, and both were responsible. We do not get the impression that Second Death is in this picture.

At the very least, certainly there is a moral lesson here of *what not to do*. Being consecrated, we are to pay strict attention to the Lord's instruction and not deviate from it, even if one *close to us* gives contrary counsel.

What is especially puzzling is the presence of the lion and the ass and their being immobile. Not only did the prophet's carcass lie between them, but the lion did not devour it. Otherwise, we could see a chronological application with respect to the division of the kingdom into ten and two tribes in the type and a division in the professed Church of Christ during the Gospel Age in the antitype: (1) an earlier division in the Roman Empire between east and west and (2) a later division between Catholicism and Protestantism.

1 Kings 13:33 After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.

1 Kings 13:34 And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

Jeroboam persisted in his evil ways. Not only did he continue to make priests of unfit people, but he, too, was a priest. Jeroboam's house would be cut off because of the sin.

Comment: Jeroboam seems to represent unrepentant Papacy. Perhaps the two prophets picture two compromising classes during the Gospel Age.

Reply: Jeroboam's character was like Pharaoh's, and the ultimate fate of both was destruction. Originally God had told Jeroboam that if he was faithful, his house would be blessed; that is, God would bless both divisions of Israel. (It would not be blessed to the degree of the sure and steadfast promise to David, but it would be honored.) However, Jeroboam's disobedience forfeited the blessing. Papacy, too, went astray.

1 Kings 14:1 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick.

1 Kings 14:2 And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people.

Jeroboam's son Abijah was sick. Instead of going himself, he sent his wife, who was disguised, to Ahijah the prophet at Shiloh in *Judah*. She was to inquire in regard to what the future would

hold for this ailing son.

Comment: It is amazing how little appreciation Jeroboam had for the power of Almighty God to not realize that the identity of his wife would be revealed to the prophet.

Reply: It is rather odd that Jeroboam told his wife to put on a *disguise* and then ask for a prognostication *of the future*. Also, it is odd that Jeroboam did not consult the prophets at Dan or Bethel, at the rival altars he had instituted, but inquired instead of the tribe of Judah. One reason he sent his wife to Judah was that Ahijah was the prophet who had originally predicted his kingship over the ten tribes (1 Kings 11:29-31). Although the distance was not great from Bethel to Shiloh, Jeroboam was concerned she would be recognized in traveling to the prophet.

Comment: The Tabernacle was in Shiloh for many years. Now, of course, the Temple had been built, but there was still a reverence for Shiloh based on its past history.

Reply: Yes, and prophets were sprinkled *throughout* the nation, even during the period of the apostasy of the divided kingdom. We hear of only a few of them, two or three at a time.

Comment: Jeroboam must have realized that he was more likely to get true information from the prophet in Judah than from the prophets in his own ten tribes.

1 Kings 14:3 And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

1 Kings 14:4 And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age.

The king's wife brought food as a gift for the prophet and then inquired regarding her son. A number of years had passed, so Abijah, an heir to the throne, was now a young man, not a "child." By this time, Ahijah had poor eyesight because of his age.

Comment: Earlier Jeroboam was told that the kingdom would be rent from him because of disobedience in making himself a priest and offering incense (1 Kings 13:2,3). When he reacted with anger, his arm became like a stick. Even though the man of God who was present healed the arm, Jeroboam probably felt he had no right to approach God.

Reply: Jeroboam did not repent after that manifestation of the Lord's displeasure.

Comment: According to Young's *Analytical Concordance*, "cracknels" are small, dry cakes.

1 Kings 14:5 And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman.

1 Kings 14:6 And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.

1 Kings 14:7 Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel,

1 Kings 14:8 And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me

with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes;

God not only informed the prophet in advance that Jeroboam's disguised wife was coming to ask about the health of her son but also gave the prophet the message for her. Notice that when she arrived—at the sound of her footsteps—Ahijah *immediately* addressed and identified her and gave her the bad tidings about her son. In other words, he gave the answer before she asked. Ahijah said to her, “Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another woman? I am sent to you with heavy tidings.” God's message for Jeroboam was, “I have exalted you over the ten tribes, but you have not been as my servant David. You have been disobedient and have done evil.”

When David went astray, he repented. In later life, after he learned certain lessons, such as with the Ark of Covenant, he was very diligent and zealous for the Lord and for the Temple, even though he could not build it.

God was asking through Ahijah, “Jeroboam, why do you ask about the prosperity of your child and his future when you yourself have not obeyed my counsel?” It was not consistent for a person to make a petition when he had not first brought himself into alignment and harmony with God.

Comment: God gives many opportunities for change when a person starts to go astray as a new creature. He did the same with Israel and with certain individuals in the Old Testament. For example, Jeroboam got several lessons, which he ignored.

1 Kings 14:9 But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back:

1 Kings 14:10 Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

1 Kings 14:11 Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken it.

1 Kings 14:12 Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.

The queen would have felt sick upon hearing this bad news with regard to not only her son but also the future of the ten tribes; all were doomed. In making molten images and standing statues of false gods, Jeroboam did “evil above all that were before” him, that is, above what Saul, Solomon, and even Rehoboam had done. Eventually all of Jeroboam's posterity would be cut off; they would be taken away as dung is burned (see the RSV). A pile of dung was depleted shovelful by shovelful as it was burned for fuel; accordingly, the evil would come upon the ten tribes in stages. For example, a son of Jeroboam did reign in his stead but not Abijah. Of Jeroboam's posterity, only Abijah would have a proper burial in a sepulchre.

The prophet told Jeroboam's wife, “Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.” In other words, God would time the punishment of Abijah's death to coincide with her arrival at her home city. In connection with the miracles of Jesus, which involved healings, and here where death was involved, the timing was arranged for a psychological purpose and to provide a more profound lesson.

1 Kings 14:13 And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

1 Kings 14:14 Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now.

1 Kings 14:15 For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger.

1 Kings 14:16 And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

God saw something good in Abijah. According to Jewish history, he is purported to have opposed some of his father's idolatrous practices, but not being the king, he could not do much under the circumstances. The ten tribes mourned when Abijah died, as Ahijah had predicted.

Q: What does the expression "beyond the river" mean? The ten tribes would be uprooted and scattered beyond the river.

A: The reference was to the river Euphrates (see the RSV). This was a prophecy that not only would the posterity of Jeroboam cease step by step (as dung is removed), but also the ten tribes would be taken into captivity in a foreign land beyond the river Euphrates at a later date. As a result of God's displeasure, they would be removed from their homeland.

"For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land." This part of the prophecy is almost like a reference to conditions in Egypt, which Jeroboam was familiar with because he had lived there. He may have actually observed reeds shaking in the water in his younger days, and now, many years later, the Lord used this very observation to show that it had an application to the king's seed.

1 Kings 14:17 And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;

1 Kings 14:18 And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

1 Kings 14:19 And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

1 Kings 14:20 And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

Notice that Jeroboam "*slept* with his fathers"; the condition of death is likened to a sleep.

Comment: The timing is emphasized here. As Jeroboam's wife "came to the threshold of the door," their son died.

1 Kings 14:21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

1 Kings 14:22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.

1 Kings 14:23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.

1 Kings 14:24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

Meanwhile, Rehoboam had reigned 17 years in Jerusalem. The account is now switching to the southern kingdom and picking up the thread of history in a flashback to the conditions of Rehoboam's reign. The northern kingdom was worse, but Judah's sins were also great. However, there were a few good kings subsequently in the lineage of Judah.

The nation of Israel was divided in the third or fourth year of Rehoboam's reign. Therefore, approximately 13 years of his reign remained when Jeroboam began to reign. Since the latter was king for 22 years (verse 20), his reign extended beyond Rehoboam's by about nine years.

"Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed." The account contains a clue as to how some of these evils started. For example, Rehoboam's mother was an Ammonite, not an Israelite. Solomon had many foreign wives, who stole his heart away, and he built high places for them. These conditions still existed in Rehoboam's reign, and because he did not try to stop them, they got progressively worse. An additional abomination is now mentioned, one that we do not read about in Solomon's reign; namely, "there were also sodomites in the land."

Comment: Instead of "sodomites," the Revised Standard Version reads, "For they also built for themselves high places, and pillars, and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree; and there were also *male cult prostitutes* in the land."

Reply: Some try to say that this sodomy was attached to religious practices and that it did not pertain to general conditions in the domestic arena, but it affected both. In many nations, harlots called "vestal virgins" were part of the false religious worship. The bulk of the fees that were paid for their immoral practices went into the heathen temple coffers. In this case, male prostitutes, which were a throwback to the days of Lot, were also associated with the pagan temples. However, as stated in verse 24, the sodomites were "in the land," not just in the temples.

Romans 1:26,27 *plainly* shows that homosexuality is a perversion. Intimate physical relations with the same sex are unnatural. "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." The depravity in those days was bad enough with the opposite sex, but degradation into homosexuality was even worse. And in time, the degradation went even further to intercourse with animals. Notice what verse 24 says: "They [the sodomites of Judah] did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD [had] cast out before the children of Israel [came into the land]." Sodomy was a deterioration that went back to the abominable conditions of the Canaanite era.

1 Kings 14:25 And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:

1 Kings 14:26 And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

1 Kings 14:27 And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house.

1 Kings 14:28 And it was so, when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber.

During Solomon's reign, Israel had an alliance with Egypt, for he married a daughter of the Pharaoh. Now, in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, Shishak, the king of Egypt, came against the two tribes and took as booty treasures of the king's house and of the Temple. Therefore, Rehoboam commanded that brass (or copper) shields be made to replace stolen gold shields. As a judgment from the Lord, Shishak came with a large invading force of 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen (2 Chron. 12:2,3). Judah suffered great humiliation in being stripped of her glory.

1 Kings 14:29 Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

1 Kings 14:30 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.

1 Kings 14:31 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

The statement "there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days" has to be considered in a modified sense as being more like border and factional disputes, not invasions. There was no peace and harmony between the two kingdoms, who had different religions, as it were, with their own places of worship. They were almost completely alienated from one another, and they would not confederate unless they saw that doing so was to the common good of both. With the heart of the king of Egypt being set on the treasures of Jerusalem, the northern kingdom did not mind seeing a judgment come on the southern kingdom. Hence the northern kingdom did not assist in resisting this invasion from Egypt.

Q: Who wrote "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah"?

A: No doubt a contemporary government scribe was appointed during the reign of each of the kings to record all the important events that occurred. Much, much later in history, the books of Kings and Chronicles were complete as we have them today, but they are a digest, a greatly condensed history, from the original records. We believe that Ezra was responsible for wading through the histories and extracting pertinent parts to make a cohesive whole. The records of both kingdoms were available for him to cull information. Of course there would be lapses where the records did not completely jibe because of the alienation. Similarly, we learned *after* World War II—sometimes many years later—certain things that had happened in Germany. Then we got a much better picture of what had taken place, for example, in regard to Papacy's relationship with Hitler.

Thus, through Ezra, there was a later revision under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Being a hard-liner for righteousness, Ezra is an interesting character to study. The Old Testament scrolls were lost for a time, but they were found in the treasure houses of the heathen kings. When

heathen rulers captured the Israelites, they took the goods including historical records. Hence it was through God's providence in later years that the records were recovered. Of course they were in disarray, but Ezra coordinated them.

Q: 2 Chronicles 12:15 reads, "Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies?" Were Shemaiah the prophet and Iddo the seer both scribes?

A: Yes. There were plenty of records, but they needed coordination. Ezra beautifully coordinated five centuries of history in about 20 pages of Scripture in Kings and Chronicles. David, Solomon, and Rehoboam were given a lot of attention. Most of the others, king after king, were treated briefly.

Q: Are there other antitypical lessons in the lives of Jeroboam and Rehoboam?

A: There are a lot of typical lessons, but at the present time, we have to be careful not to overdraw antitypes. In the Kingdom and especially beyond the Kingdom, after the Millennial Age, the history will be thoroughly understood and recorded for all future generations yet to be born on other planets and in other worlds. The Bible is the history book for all physical universes. Just as we go back to Adam and Eve and trace how sin developed, so that will be done in the everlasting future. These things will be thoroughly opened after the Millennium. There will be only a partial opening during the Kingdom because the Lord will be looking for converts, not scholars, in that age. Reformation of character will be the emphasis. Of course educational films will be shown, but in the ages of ages, history will be clearly revealed in every respect to those from the Jewish, Gospel, Millennial, etc., ages who have made their calling and election sure.

1 Kings 15:1 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah.

1 Kings 15:2 Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

1 Kings 15:3 And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.

1 Kings 15:4 Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem:

1 Kings 15:5 Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

In Jeroboam's eighteenth year of reigning over the ten tribes, Abijam (also called Abijah) began to reign in Judah. The lineage of Judah's kings will continue to be traced for a while. The names are confusing, for there were two Abijahs and one Ahijah close together in the history of Israel and Judah. There was a great similarity between the northern and southern kingdoms—and especially later when intermarriages occurred. At times, kings with the same name were reigning over the two kingdoms.

Abijam reigned for only three years and sinned like his father Rehoboam. Abijam's "heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as [was] the heart of David." Nevertheless, *for David's sake*, because of his faithfulness, God gave a "lamp [or candle] ... to establish Jerusalem." The account

keeps repeating how much God appreciated David.

The back-and-forth referrals of the two lineages—of the king who was reigning in the ten tribes with the king who reigned in the two tribes—enable us to establish, with great accuracy, a chronological account of the 513-year Period of the Kings.

1 Kings 15:6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

1 Kings 15:7 Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

1 Kings 15:8 And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

Abijam, Rehoboam's son, was contemporary for a period of time with the reign of Jeroboam. When Abijam died, his son Asa (grandson of Rehoboam) reigned in Judah. Jeroboam was still the king of the ten tribes when Asa began his reign.

1 Kings 15:9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.

1 Kings 15:10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

1 Kings 15:11 And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father.

1 Kings 15:12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

Comment: How refreshing it is to find that Asa was a good king!

Reply: Asa reigned for 41 years, and there was a big change, for he removed the sodomites and "all the idols that his fathers had made." Maachah was the mother of Abijam and the grandmother of Asa (see KJV margin and verse 2).

"Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father." Again there is a reference to David, this time showing a similarity in a favorable comparison.

1 Kings 15:13 And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron.

1 Kings 15:14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.

1 Kings 15:15 And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.

David donated a tremendous treasure to the Temple out of his own personal estate. In addition, he may have deeded certain things, and now, several generations later, Asa tried to restore the kingdom as it was in the days of David. The implication is that he referred back to the practices of David with regard to the Temple.

To Asa's credit, he removed his own grandmother from being the queen mother because of her idolatry, and he destroyed her idol. Not all of the high places were eliminated, but "nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days."

1 Kings 15:16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

1 Kings 15:17 And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

1 Kings 15:18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

1 Kings 15:19 There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

Baasha was now the king of the ten tribes. He "went up against Judah" and built a fortification, or Maginot Line, of some kind at Ramah to cut off the subjects of the northern kingdom and keep them from worshipping at the Temple in Jerusalem. While there were idols in Dan and Bethel, Israelites who were not in sympathy with that practice infiltrated into Judah to attend services. The kings of the ten tribes were disturbed by this practice.

The fortification at Ramah was too close to Jerusalem for Asa, for at any moment, King Baasha could launch a surprise attack from this outpost. Therefore, Asa took steps to frustrate Baasha; namely, he sent a present—all the silver and gold treasures that were left in the Temple and the king's house—to the king of Syria at Damascus, asking him to break his league with Baasha.

1 Kings 15:20 So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

1 Kings 15:21 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.

1 Kings 15:22 Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

1 Kings 15:23 The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.

1 Kings 15:24 And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

The king of Syria hearkened to Asa, and Baasha was forced to withdraw from the fortification at Ramah to his headquarters at Tirzah. If he had stayed at Ramah, the king of Syria could have attacked him from the rear. Tirzah is supposed to have had a wonderful palace, and in Israel today, archaeological ruins are still visible. Hence the name Tirzah has the connotation of great beauty and palatial splendor.

Comment: 2 Chronicles 16:12 reads, “And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.”

Reply: This insertion shows that King Asa was not perfect, but nevertheless, he was a good king compared to others excluding David. Asa could have had gout or gangrene, and even heart or kidney trouble can be painful when ulceration, water, and swelling develop. At any rate, he suffered greatly.

King Asa died, and his son Jehoshaphat reigned in his stead. We are now advancing quite rapidly through the condensed history of the kings. Soon the account in 1 Kings will become more notably prophetic.

1 Kings 15:25 And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.

1 Kings 15:26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

The prophecy was that if Jeroboam worshipped and was faithful to the God of Israel, his kingdom would be secure. However, he tried to alienate the populace from the southern kingdom by building two different houses of worship and instituting heathen worship and practices at Dan and Bethel. At his death, his son Nadab supplanted him in the second year of Asa, king of Judah. Nadab, who had a short two-year reign, was evil.

1 Kings 15:27 And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon.

1 Kings 15:28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 15:29 And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite:

1 Kings 15:30 Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

Comment: Baasha conspired against Nadab and slew him. Of course God permitted this slaying to fulfill the prophecy against Jeroboam, but nevertheless, it shows the violence that had entered the ten tribes and the deterioration.

Reply: Nadab reigned for only two years because he was slain through treachery. When he became king, he was preoccupied with besieging Gibbethon, a fortress city of the Philistines on the Mediterranean coast. However, Baasha, who was of the northern kingdom and wanted to be king, took Nadab by surprise and killed him. As king, Baasha “smote all the house of Jeroboam ... according unto the saying of the LORD,” as prophesied by Ahijah the Shilonite.

After Solomon’s death, Jeroboam left Egypt and returned to Israel. When the kingdom was divided into Israel and Judah, he became the king of the ten tribes, and Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, reigned over the southern kingdom. On Jeroboam’s travel back to Israel from Egypt,

Ahijah the prophet had met him and torn Jeroboam's garment into 12 pieces. Ten pieces were given to Jeroboam to symbolize that he would be king over the ten tribes and that if he obeyed the Lord, he and his posterity would be secure on the throne. Otherwise, the kingdom would be rent from him, and his posterity would be exterminated. Through Baasha, that prophecy was fulfilled. Not only did Baasha assassinate Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, but he smote all of Jeroboam's lineage.

Comment: Meanwhile, good King Asa was reigning in Judah, and he reigned for 41 years. During that time, six evil kings reigned successively in the ten tribes.

1 Kings 15:31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

1 Kings 15:32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

1 Kings 15:33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years.

1 Kings 15:34 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

Like Jeroboam and Nadab, Baasha was an evil king. Details of that wickedness are recorded in history ("in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel"), but they are not included in the Holy Scriptures because they were not considered to be of sufficient value. This "book of the chronicles" was discovered in Persia, for when Persia conquered Israel, the records were put in the libraries of that realm. In time, the king gave the records to Ezra, who condensed them into the accounts of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles as part of Holy Writ.

Comment: Quite a lot of details are given on Jeroboam's sins, and since his sons committed the same sins, we know that Jeroboam set a precedent for heathen worship. The details of his sons' sins are not necessary, for they sinned similarly.

Reply: Yes. For instance, Molech, the fire god, was worshipped. A person was considered very devout if he dedicated his firstborn son or daughter to that god, which was a metal statue that contained an oven. Children were put in the arms of Molech, roasted alive, and then eaten. The Bible does not describe all the atrocities of the Canaanites, but we can ascertain them from other histories. The gods of Baal and Ashtoreth were also worshipped.

In the Jewish religion, animal sacrifice was no different in effect than the meat we eat. The animals were slain by cutting the throat so that they died quickly and painlessly. The point is that *dead* animals were put on the altar, and there were helpful symbolic meanings. Also, for the most part, only the inner organs were burnt on the altar, creating a sweet savor, or smell, and the flesh was eaten by the people who attended the particular religious festival. Thus the sacrifices served the purpose of feeding the people, and food was needed because most of the festivals lasted for seven days. In contrast, the heathen religions used *live* sacrifices, and this practice is still followed today in certain nations.

The original capital of the ten tribes was Bethel. Here the capital was Tirzah, and still later it became Samaria.

1 Kings 16:1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,

1 Kings 16:2 Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;

1 Kings 16:3 Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

1 Kings 16:4 Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.

1 Kings 16:5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

1 Kings 16:6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

Baasha and his posterity were slain because of their sins. According to the word of God, which came through Jehu the prophet, none of Baasha's posterity would survive, and they would not even get a decent burial in a sepulchre, although Baasha himself was buried in Tirzah.

1 Kings 16:7 And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

1 Kings 16:8 In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

1 Kings 16:9 And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah.

1 Kings 16:10 And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

Now the account is telling about one king after another in the northern kingdom. Elah, Baasha's son, reigned for just two years. (Meanwhile, Asa was still reigning in Judah.) Thus far the sequence of kings in the ten tribes was Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, and Zimri.

Comment: The name Zimri is significant in 2 Kings 9:30,31, where Jezebel, who saw Jehu in the distance coming at great speed, painted her face and asked him, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master [Elah]?"

Reply: Yes. It is interesting that a prophet of the Lord named Jehu is in this chapter. Another Jehu was a captain in Israel who was anointed to be the king (2 Kings 9). This later Jehu account is very enlightening from a prophetic standpoint, for it has a bearing on events that are occurring in our day and in the near future.

Again there was a conspiracy in the northern kingdom, with a lot of bloodletting occurring between rival factions. Zimri, Elah's captain, conspired against him while the king was getting drunk in Tirzah. In a treasonous act, Zimri killed Elah and reigned in his stead.

1 Kings 16:11 And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither

of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.

1 Kings 16:12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet,

1 Kings 16:13 For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

1 Kings 16:14 Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Zimri slew all of Baasha's posterity, fulfilling the prophecy of Jehu the prophet (verse 7). It will be interesting to see the details of the history of these kings when the books of the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah are revealed. The accounts are condensed here, but much more attention will be given to such characters as Ahab, Jezebel, and Jehoshaphat because they are of signal importance.

1 Kings 16:15 In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.

1 Kings 16:16 And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

1 Kings 16:17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

1 Kings 16:18 And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died,

1 Kings 16:19 For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.

1 Kings 16:20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Comment: Jehu and Zimri were both captains (1 Kings 16:9; 2 Kings 9:5). Therefore, Jezebel's comment was insightful: "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" (2 Kings 9:31). With Zimri living only seven days after becoming king, she knew the history of Israel to be able to mention his name to Jehu.

Reply: The fact that Jezebel had this knowledge going back three or four generations is interesting because, being a Zidonian, she was of a foreign country (1 Kings 16:31). Also, both back there and today, the military frequently succeeded in overturning the government.

The constant references to other books substantiate the thought that 1 Kings is a condensed report. Again the account mentions Gibbethon, a fortified city in Philistia, which is the Gaza Strip today. Earlier King Nadab was assassinated when he was besieging Gibbethon, and now the same area was being besieged again (1 Kings 15:27,28).

Zimri reigned for only seven days, which was the shortest reign of any king in the Period of

the Kings. During that time, while the others were preoccupied in fighting against Gibbethon, he did mischief in Tirzah, the capital. When the people heard of Zimri's treason, they made another captain, Omri, the king. Omri and the people went to Tirzah and besieged it. When Tirzah was captured, Zimri went into the king's palace and committed suicide by setting this beautiful structure on fire for vengeance.

As with the evil kings before him, Zimri died "for his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin."

Comment: The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles are a second witness.

Reply: Peculiar to the history of Israel, the kingly lineages of the northern and southern kingdoms are *equated with great accuracy*. The Persian records, for example, do not give such a connected chronology; hence much of what the scholars piece together is conjecture. The strange thing with the chronologies of Babylon, Egypt, etc., is that whenever a new king assumed the throne, he regarded the events under his reign as the beginning of history. In other words, the new king's reign was not coordinated with, or related to, that of the previous king, for each king was a life unto himself. Therefore, separate periods of time have to be pieced together for a connected chronology, and there are differences with the scholars.

The principle is that out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, a matter is established (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28). Therefore, one of the purposes of 1 and 2 Chronicles, which follow 1 and 2 Kings, was to provide a record of the kings of Judah, but events in the ten tribes were also recorded. And the deeds of the kings of Israel were equated with the deeds of the southern kingdom. Hence two lines of evidence can be compared, and they fit together like hand and glove. Thus the Bible gives us an authenticated, coherent, connected history from Adam to the present day, which helps us to know where we are on the stream of time.

1 Kings 16:21 Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.

1 Kings 16:22 But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

1 Kings 16:23 In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.

1 Kings 16:24 And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.

1 Kings 16:25 But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him.

1 Kings 16:26 For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

1 Kings 16:27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

1 Kings 16:28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

The ten tribes were divided between following Omri and Tibni. But the people who followed Omri prevailed, and Tibni died. Omri began to reign in the thirty-first year of King Asa of Judah. Omri reigned for 12 years; six of those years were in Tirzah, and six were in Samaria. Then Ahab, his son, reigned in his stead.

Comment: The evil that Omri wrought “in the eyes of the LORD ... [was] worse than all that were before him.”

Reply: Yes, and as we will find out, Ahab was still worse.

Verse 24 gives the origin of the word “Samaria,” which comes from an individual named Shemer. Omri “bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; and he fortified the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill” (RSV).

The Abydos Tablet in Egypt gives an accurate succession of kings through hieroglyphic embossments, but as was the common practice with cuneiform tablets, neither the length of each king’s reign nor the year of his death was furnished. When a king ascended the throne, he might make an obelisk in honor of a particular victory he had in battle, and he would ascribe the victory to, say, his twenty-first year. The scribe then embellished the monument with a lot of complimentary adjectives about the king’s deeds. But the year of death was not on the obelisk. The monuments of both Egypt and Babylon were of this nature, so it is not possible for scholars who try to piece together bits of evidence to come up with an accurate chronology.

1 Kings 16:29 And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

1 Kings 16:30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.

1 Kings 16:31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

1 Kings 16:32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

1 Kings 16:33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

1 Kings 16:34 In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

Now we are finally coming to the time in the northern kingdom when Ahab, the son of Omri, appeared on the scene. In Asa’s thirty-eighth year, Ahab began to reign. His reign lasted for 22 years, and the evil he committed was the worst yet. “Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.” One reason for his sins was that he married Jezebel, a Zidonian, who further complicated matters. Under the influence

of her bad character, he “went and served Baal, and worshipped him.” Ahab even built an altar to Baal. Because of Jezebel’s influence over Ahab, she was practically the ruler of Israel.

Verses 29-34 are a summation of King Ahab’s reign. Subsequent chapters will provide details of his life and what bearing it had on the lives of Elijah and Elisha.

Comment: The scene was being set for Elijah’s contest with the 450 prophets of Baal. For years, the Lord permitted evil kings to reign. With Elijah, the issue was finally brought to a head.

Verse 34 mentions Jericho, which was destroyed by an earthquake in the days of Joshua. Now an individual by the name of Hiel started to rebuild that city, beginning with the foundation.

Comment: Joshua 6:26 reads, “And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.”

Reply: Yes. In connection with that curse, two of Hiel’s sons died prematurely as a punishment for their father’s attempt to rebuild Jericho. Perhaps Hiel was not cognizant of that prophecy from the days of Joshua, but after the death of his two sons, it was called to his attention.

1 Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

1 Kings 17:2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

1 Kings 17:3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

1 Kings 17:4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

1 Kings 17:5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

1 Kings 17:6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

1 Kings 17:7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Elijah the Tishbite had to make a strong proclamation to King Ahab: “As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” The period with neither dew nor rain lasted for 3 1/2 years, and for much of this time, Elijah was at the brook Cherith.

When Elijah issued this proclamation, Ahab would have been stunned. The prophet then fled quickly to the brook Cherith and hid himself there, as instructed. “Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan [in Israel].” The word from God continued, “You shall drink water from the brook, and I have commanded ravens to feed you there.” The ravens brought Elijah bread and flesh morning and evening. Elijah’s necessities were thus provided for.

Like a bedouin, Elijah dressed in rough skins, or hairy garments. For him to have gone to Ahab, the king of Israel, who had a notorious reputation, and issue this proclamation was a courageous act. The message would have been delivered *with confidence*.

Ravens are flesh-eating birds. In fact, the word “ravenous” comes from “raven.” Therefore, we can be sure that the meat they brought to Elijah was *freshly* slain.

There is a prophetic aspect to this account, for during the period of papal persecution in the Dark and Middle Ages in Europe, worldly unconsecrated people (“ravens”) fed, hid, and helped Christians who were fleeing from brutal persecution. If caught, this “raven” class would have been punished severely, so many risked their lives by helping Christians. In the antitype, Elijah represents God’s people down through the Gospel Age who were preserved and fed from His Word and given time to develop Christlike characters in the hope of being kings and priests in the Kingdom Age. Many were tried and executed, but at least, they had an opportunity to develop their characters.

In time, the brook Cherith dried up, and Elijah had to move to another place. God’s instruction came to him, starting in verse 8.

1 Kings 17:8 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

1 Kings 17:9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

1 Kings 17:10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

1 Kings 17:11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

1 Kings 17:12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

1 Kings 17:13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

1 Kings 17:14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

1 Kings 17:15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

1 Kings 17:16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

Elijah was told to leave the brook Cherith and go to Zarephath, which is in Lebanon today—and thus was quite a distance to go on foot. First, he went to Zidon, the capital of Phoenicia, as a landmark. Zarephath was located in a little village nearby. When Elijah entered the gate, he saw a woman gathering sticks. God had told him that a widow would sustain him there, so he called out to her, “Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” Then, being famished, he added, “Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread.”

With a famine in the land, the woman had been gathering sticks to prepare a fire to bake a cake of her last handful of flour mixed with oil. She had to scrape the bottom of the barrel to get the flour, and there was a little oil left in the cruse. Her expectation was that after this last meal, she and her son would die of starvation. Under this dire circumstance, Elijah had asked for something to eat. Imagine being in the woman's place and getting this request for food!

Elijah next said, "Fear not; go and do as you have said. But make me a little cake *first*, and bring it to me, and *afterward* make one for you and your son. For God has said that the barrel will not be emptied of meal or the cruse of oil, until the very day He sends rain to end the famine." Elijah's request was a test on the widow, and faith was involved. Perhaps the woman had been praying, but at any rate, she obeyed in this time of extremity. "And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah."

Elijah must have had a very magnetic, forceful personality. He started his mission by going to King Ahab and reprimanding him to his face with the boldness and courage that were instilled by the Lord. Now he spoke to the widow. His manner of speaking was convincing and persuasive, and she believed him. According to the King James margin, for a "full year," they ate of the flour and the oil that kept replenishing. Therefore, Elijah was at the brook Cherith for at least two years, and then he was in Zarephath for another year.

Jesus used this widow of Zarephath as an illustration of faith when he was castigating the Israelites for not believing. Even after all his miracles, the number of believers was only 500 of the 7 million or so people who lived in Israel at that time. As an example of faith, Jesus also used Naaman the Syrian leper, who came for help. They had more faith than anyone in Israel. Israel was chosen for several reasons, one of which is geographic. The future capital of the world, Israel is in the navel of the earth; it is the land bridge of three continents.

Comment: Luke 4:24-27 reads as follows: "And he [Jesus] said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." The widow of Zarephath was a woman of great faith *prior* to Elijah's coming to her. Her words to Elijah here in chapter 17 show her faith: "As the LORD thy God *liveth*."

Reply: Jesus said that a prophet is without honor in his own country, for even in his own household, some of his stepbrothers did not believe he was the Messiah until later.

Comment: What a wonderful experience! Each time the widow wanted to eat, she went to the barrel and the cruse, and there was a supply of flour and oil, respectively. And the replenishing continued until the *very day* God sent the rain (verse 14).

Reply: The proverbial term "the widow's cruse" means that the vessel never emptied.

Incidentally, among other qualifications, Elijah was quite a runner, as we will see. With a little help, he outran King Ahab in his chariot. Moreover, he traversed tremendous distances.

1 Kings 17:17 And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

1 Kings 17:18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

1 Kings 17:19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

1 Kings 17:20 And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

1 Kings 17:21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

1 Kings 17:22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

1 Kings 17:23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

1 Kings 17:24 And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

Subsequently the widow's son got very sick and died. In distress, she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" Elijah's response was, "Give me your son." Then Elijah took the dead son up into his little quarters—the "loft"—and laid the boy on his own bed. When the prophet stretched himself upon the boy three times and prayed to the Lord, the boy's soul came "into his inward parts" (see KJV margin), and he revived. What a marvelous miracle! Elijah then delivered the boy to his mother. Now she *knew* that he was a man of God and that truth was in his mouth.

Elijah's lying upon the child was like mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, but nevertheless, the revival was a miracle. This was a beautiful experience for the woman, but there was a *testing* all along the line, starting when Elijah requested her last morsel of food. As she exercised faith under this testing, her character was strengthened. Similarly in principle, an athlete who lifts weights develops strength in his muscles. Thus the exercise of faith in instances of crises strengthens one's character, experience, and maturity.

At the same time, the three stretchings, followed by resuscitation, helped the development of Elijah's character and faith. He was growing as a man of faith. Of course he had recognized God's providence in his being fed by ravens with bread and flesh for two years. But we see some strange situations where individuals who have been unusually blessed do not have faith. Sad to say, they do not develop faith when they are recipients of God's providence. Much has to do with the *exercise* of the mind and the heart to *recognize* that the experiences are of Divine Providence. If realized, the providences become stepping-stones toward progress in Christian development. Elijah was being schooled, developed, and matured for the things he had to do.

Comment: Apparently, Elijah had a little chamber up in a loft on the outside of the house.

Q: Is there an antitype about the three times that Elijah stretched himself upon the child? Does that miracle bring us forward into the Kingdom Age?

A: A principle is involved in restoring a dead person to life—not only in the *three* stretchings

with Elijah but also in the *seven sneezings* with Elisha (2 Kings 4:35). Both numbers are symbols of completion but from two different standpoints.

Comment: Verses 21 and 22 are good proof texts with regard to the meaning of the soul. *The soul came into the child again.* The soul is not the product of breath and body, for there was a definite reimplanting.

Reply: In today's era of technology, we can easily see how this can be the case. The study of the soul is very interesting, but we must leave it for another occasion.

We are getting a backlog of information on Elijah so that later we can bring it together and study the prophetic implications.

1 Kings 18:1 And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

“In the third year,” near the end of the 3 1/2 years of drought, God told Elijah to show himself to King Ahab of the ten tribes. For two years, Elijah had been at the brook Cherith where he was fed by ravens, and then he went to the home of the widow of Zarephath, where he stayed for a while. Now he was instructed to go to Ahab. Presumably, based on the previous chapter, Elijah was up in Lebanon, so he had to journey south to the vicinity of Megiddo where the king was situated. God said He would send rain after Elijah met with Ahab.

1 Kings 18:2 And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.

With the drought lasting 3 1/2 years, the famine was especially severe in Samaria, including the capital of the ten-tribe kingdom. Of course each year the famine got worse. Elijah started on his journey “to show himself unto Ahab.”

Q: With Ahab and Samaria representing Papacy in the antitype, is the thought that the lack of truth was particularly severe during the 1,260 years from 539 to 1799?

A: Yes, there was a great drought in papal terrain in the Middle and Dark Ages.

1 Kings 18:3 And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

1 Kings 18:4 For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

Ahab called the governor of his house, Obadiah, who feared Jehovah greatly. He manifested this “fear” when Jezebel was killing God’s prophets. At that time, Obadiah hid 100 prophets of the Lord (in two groups of 50 each) “in a cave” and, for the sake of expediency, fed them with the barest essentials of bread and water. (There were probably two caves, and he hid 50 prophets in each cave.) Thus Obadiah saved a remnant of God’s prophets.

1 Kings 18:5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

1 Kings 18:6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one

way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

Ahab had called Obadiah because of the severity of the drought. He wanted Obadiah to go in one direction, and he would go in the other direction, looking for some water and grass to feed the animals. Accordingly, the land was divided between them, and the two separated.

1 Kings 18:7 And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?

As Obadiah was looking for water, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized Elijah and fell on his face before him, for he greatly respected the prophet. Nevertheless, he asked, “Are you Elijah?” In other words, Obadiah thought the man was Elijah, but he wanted to make sure. Perhaps an interval of time had elapsed since their last meeting, and appearances do change.

1 Kings 18:8 And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

Elijah instructed Obadiah to go and tell King Ahab that he was here.

1 Kings 18:9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

1 Kings 18:10 As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

1 Kings 18:11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

1 Kings 18:12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

1 Kings 18:13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD’S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

1 Kings 18:14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

Why did Obadiah go into this explanation? Why was he fearful? Obadiah realized that when he met Ahab later, the king would ask, “Have you found any grass? And incidentally, did you happen to see Elijah during your search?” Obadiah did not want to lie, but he feared the consequences if he said yes and Elijah was not with him. Here is an insight into Obadiah’s character. Not only had he hidden 100 of the true prophets earlier, but now he did not want to tell a falsehood. However, he was nervous about how to handle the situation, for he could see that Elijah did not intend to accompany him and was afraid the prophet would disappear in the interim. Obadiah assumed that Elijah would be whisked away by the Spirit—that he would be translated—as had apparently happened on numerous previous occasions.

As indicated in verse 9, because of the predicament he was in, Obadiah thought maybe he had sinned and was being punished. Here is another insight into Obadiah. He was not certain that Elijah intended to remain there until Ahab came. With this measure of uncertainty, Obadiah wondered if God’s providence was punishing him for something he might have done.

Comment: Elijah had characteristically moved around a lot, and Obadiah knew he would be in hot water with Ahab if the message was given and Elijah had vacated the area.

Reply: Yes, for Ahab had been searching for Elijah not only in Israel but also in alien territory. Knowing Ahab's temperament, Obadiah realized the king's wrath would be carried out on him for not apprehending Elijah.

Verses 10 and 11 show that Ahab's method was to require an oath of people that Elijah had not been there. In other words, the king pressured those under his charge to search for Elijah. Ahab was searching diligently to find him. Therefore, Obadiah was afraid he would be asked to take an oath in the name of Jehovah, and he did not want to lie lest he break one of the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain" (Exod. 20:7).

Q: Is there an antitype for Obadiah?

A: During the Inquisition, a class in Christendom was not in heart sympathy with Papacy's persecuting tactics. Knowing where Christians were, this class warned them to flee when persecution was coming. Thus we think Obadiah represents a class within Christendom who were considered loyal subjects to the rulers. Obadiah was not under suspicion because he was in the house of Ahab, but that does not mean he did not love the Lord. In the antitype, this slaying of the prophets took place during the Middle and Dark Ages, for the rainstorm occurred in 1799 (1 Kings 18:44).

Q: Spiritually speaking, the 3 1/2 years were from 539 to 1799, and the antitypical Elijah was fed by "ravens" (an unconsecrated element) for much of that time. Did the sympathy of the raven class extend into the Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther?

A: There were two 1,260-year time periods. The 1,260 years of famine for the Word of God ended in 1525, and the 1,260 years with Elijah terminated in 1799. These two time periods overlapped. Stated another way, one 1,260-year period began in 265, and the other started in 539. With only a 274-year differential, a large portion of the two 1,260-year time periods overlapped, with a famine in the land and the hunting of the Elijah class to persecute them. The account in Revelation 11:3-12 is from a different perspective. While the Word of God was translated from the Vulgate into the language of the people, it took time for that Word to trickle down to the people where it would be very meaningful, and that occurred after 1799 with the abundance of Bible societies. Hence there was a void between 1525 and 1799, but in the meantime, the New and Old Testaments, the Word of God, stood on their feet for a period of 3 1/2 literal years. However, their subsequent ascent "up to heaven," to a place of great prominence, corresponds with the abundant rain in 1 Kings 18:44,45.

The raising up of the man-child (Papacy) to a position of authority in 539, when it became the man of sin, is similar. The man-child of 314 was caught up to the false ecclesiastical heavens in 539. The Word of God was published in the language of the people, but at that time, it was like a babe, for it was something new and different. However, after 1799, the Word of God came into great prominence—just as the man of sin did in 539. The raising up to heaven, as it were, took a couple of centuries.

In summation, the persecution of Elijah (true Christians) by Ahab and Jezebel (the nominal system) occurred after 539, not after 265. Obadiah represents a class within the stronghold of Catholicism that was sympathetic to the Lord's people and their suffering in the Middle and Dark Ages and tried to help them escape the wrath of the antitypical Jezebel.

Q: First, Elijah was fed by ravens for a period of time. Then Obadiah sympathized and

rendered some assistance. Is the antitype consecutive timewise? Does Obadiah's hiding of 100 prophets extend antitypically from 1517, when Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, to 1799?

A: There is a sequence, but the timing cannot be pinned down that way. Obadiah fed 100 prophets with bread and water at a later period of time than the beginning of the 1,260 years in 539, but the account does not indicate how much later. When Jezebel was slaying the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah was hiding them in a cave, but the exact time is not pinpointed.

In verse 12, Obadiah said to Elijah, "It shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth." It is interesting that "the spirit of the LORD" carried Elijah from one place to another. Elijah was miraculously translated in connection with his death. When "a chariot of fire, and horses of fire" separated him from Elisha, he was translated so that his body was not found (2 Kings 2:11,15-17). On another occasion, Elijah arrived ahead of Ahab's racing chariot (1 Kings 18:46). A New Testament example is when Philip was translated to Azotus from the presence of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:39,40). In other words, verse 12 indicates that Obadiah was aware of previous incidents, not recorded in the Bible, when Elijah had been translated. Elijah had a reputation of being translated.

Obadiah continued to speak in verse 13: "Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?" It took courage for Obadiah to hide 100 prophets at the risk of his own life. Of course Ahab and Jezebel were unaware of this act, which was a public secret, but Obadiah assumed that Elijah, being a prophet, knew what had happened—or perhaps he was informed by some of the very prophets who had been rescued. In any event, he was alerting Elijah, and the recording of this exchange with Elijah informs us.

Obadiah finished speaking by saying, "And now thou [Elijah] sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he [Ahab] shall slay me." Obadiah feared that Ahab would slay him.

1 Kings 18:15 And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him today.

Elijah responded with an oath that he would show himself to Ahab that day. Thus Elijah reassured Obadiah that he would continue his journey at his own pace and appear to the king.

1 Kings 18:16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Obadiah told Ahab, and the king went to meet Elijah.

1 Kings 18:17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

Ahab asked Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" His question was a reversal of the true situation.

Comment: That is how the nominal Church views true Christians.

Reply: Yes. Also, Christians in Paul's day were addressed this way. They were accused of turning the world "upside down" (Acts 17:6).

1 Kings 18:18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

Elijah replied to Ahab, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house, your predecessors, have done the troubling." In other words, a *history* of offenses was associated with the northern kingdom, and Ahab was following in the path of his predecessors.

Comment: With the use of plural and singular pronouns, Elijah was making a distinction. "Ye [*plural*, that is, Ahab and his predecessors] have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou [Ahab, *singular*] hast followed Baalim." After marrying Jezebel, Ahab "did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the [other] kings of Israel that were before him" (1 Kings 16:33).

1 Kings 18:19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

1 Kings 18:20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

Elijah told Ahab to gather the 400 prophets of the groves, who ate "at Jezebel's table," and the 450 prophets of Baal—a total of 850 false prophets—to Mount Carmel. Ahab had wanted to apprehend Elijah, so why did he now do as Elijah commanded? For this king to acquiesce when he had such hatred for Elijah and the desire to exterminate this troublesome thorn means that the prophet talked **STRONG!** There are several other reasons why Ahab complied. (1) He wanted rain, and he thought the drought had come about because of Elijah. (2) Ahab's conscience was bothering him a little, for he knew he should not be worshipping Baal. (3) He felt the 850 prophets were already under his influence, so his attitude was, What could *one* prophet do against such odds?

1 Kings 18:21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

1 Kings 18:22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

Here again Elijah was a leading spirit. When all the people were gathered at Mount Carmel, Elijah asked them, "How long do you halt between two opinions? Follow the one who is God." The people were silent. Some of them would have been troubled with regard to the Baal worship, which was contrary to the religion of their forefathers, but no one opposed the worship openly. Elijah's question was a shocker. He was saying in effect, "Whatever you do, do it with a definitive purpose. If Baal is God, let him be God, but if Jehovah is God, let Him be God. Let us have a contest to settle the matter once and for all and not have a mixture of Baalim worship and Jehovah worship. While I am making this suggestion, plurality is on your side with 450 prophets." The proposition seemed very reasonable to Ahab.

As summarized below, Elijah contrasted singular and plural with both gods and prophets. On the one hand, he said, "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD." On the other hand, Baalim worship entailed the worship of not only Baal but also subsidiary associated gods. It is something like Catholicism's subservience to the pope as the supreme authority plus many designated idols and saints.

Elijah (a *singular* prophet) versus 450 (*plural*) Baal prophets
 Jehovah (the *singular* God) versus Baalim (*plural* gods)

Actually, Baalim is a singular god, but subsidiary gods are involved. Similarly, *Elohim* is a title of Jehovah, but it is also a title of the judges of Israel. Hence this title can be used in various ways. For instance, it refers to the plural majesty of Jehovah Himself—that He is omnipotent and omniscient and has a great scope of authority. The plural form is used to intensify the various branches of His sole supreme authority. But the *false* gods could also be *elohim*. In another illustration, the plural form Ephraim can be an *individual* (the son of Joseph), or it can mean the *tribe* of Ephraim (many people). Similarly, the word *elohim*, which is plural in form, can mean Jehovah singular, or it can refer to judges (mighty ones) plural.

Elijah used wisdom in suggesting a contest. We are reminded of Joshua, who put a question before the nation that required a decision: “If it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15). First, he proposed that Israel make a definite, positive commitment. Then, with his leadership spirit, he suggested what he and his house would do.

It is interesting that Elijah thought he was the only true prophet of the Lord. “I only, remain a prophet of the LORD.” He repeated this thought in 1 Kings 19:10,14, but God told him, “Yet I have left me *seven thousand* in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him” (1 Kings 19:18). There was only one Elijah, but God had other prophets.

1 Kings 18:23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

1 Kings 18:24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

1 Kings 18:25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

Elijah suggested that two bullocks be taken for a sacrifice, but what was unusual was that when the animals were put on the altar separately, there would be no fire underneath them. The bullocks were to be prepared for sacrifice, and then “the God that answereth by fire”—that is, the God who supernaturally ignited the fire and started the sacrifice burning—“let him be God.” Notice that Elijah took the two animals but then let the prophets of Baal choose the bullock they wanted to offer; that way they could not accuse him of a trick. One bullock would be Elijah’s offering, and the other bullock would represent the offering of the 450 prophets of Baal. Incidentally, Jezebel’s 400 prophets were not specifically mentioned in the contest.

The 450 prophets of Baal prepared their bullock first. Elijah had *great strength* to be able to prepare a bullock all by himself. To dress a bullock was no small effort, for the hide had to be removed, and the bullock was cut in pieces. Later Elijah rebuilt the altar of God with 12 stones, and this effort also required great strength. It was logical that the 450 prophets of Baal would offer their bullock first, for Elijah needed more time to prepare his sacrifice.

1 Kings 18:26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

The 450 prophets “called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon.” They went through antics and pleadings and said, “O Baal, hear us,” but they got no answer. They even “leaped upon the altar.” All this time—for three hours—Elijah was *silent*. He did not interrupt them until noontime.

1 Kings 18:27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

At noon, Elijah began to mock and goad the 450 false prophets. They knew that he was not sincere as he said, “Cry aloud: for he [Baal] is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.” Meanwhile, the people were observing what was happening, and the scene made a very deep impression on them. The fact there was no answer indicated that the worship of Baal was a false religion.

1 Kings 18:28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

In desperation, the 450 prophets of Baal cried loudly and cut themselves until “the blood *gushed out upon them*”—but to no avail.

1 Kings 18:29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

Elijah had been silent from 9 a.m. until 12 noon. At that point, he mocked the false prophets and goaded them on. Then, presumably, he waited patiently for another three hours while the false prophets continued their frenzied actions—until 3 p.m., the time of the evening sacrifice—but there was no response from Baal. There was “neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.”

1 Kings 18:30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

1 Kings 18:31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

Elijah addressed the people and exhorted them to come close to him. As the people drew near, “he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.” What is the thought here?

Comment: For the contest, Elijah chose a location where there had been an altar to Jehovah in the past. The people knew the historic significance of this altar.

Reply: Yes, he specifically chose this place at Mount Carmel, and now, in this dramatic fashion, he was exhorting the people to return to their former true worship. With the bullock already prepared, he proceeded to repair this broken-down altar. He took 12 stones “according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob.”

Comment: The symbolism was powerful because at this time, the kingdom was divided into ten

tribes and two tribes, for a total of 12. The ten tribes were disobedient in setting up rival places of worship. Therefore, Elijah was emphasizing the lesson that they were really one united kingdom as far as their religion was concerned.

Reply: Elijah definitely had a strategy in mind. Not only did he choose a site near the broken-down altar of the Lord, but by taking 12 stones, he showed that this altar represented a unified nation of 12 tribes, which included Benjamin and Judah, as well as the ten tribes.

Many years earlier “the word of the LORD” had come to Jacob, saying, “Israel shall be thy name.” Elijah may have called attention “to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob” either by gesticulation or by speaking and giving a simple explanation.

1 Kings 18:32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

Elijah built the altar in the name of Jehovah and made a trench around it that was large enough to contain “two measures of seed,” that is, two bushels. If 12 stones represented the unified kingdom of ten plus two tribes, then the two bushels of seed represented the children of Israel, the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. Mixing the two bushels in the trench—that is, combining the seed—symbolized unification.

1 Kings 18:33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

1 Kings 18:34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

1 Kings 18:35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

For Elijah to single-handedly cut the bullock in pieces indicates that he was a very strong man. Moreover, he would have done this work in an efficient fashion. After laying the bullock on the wood that was on the altar, he told the people to “fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.” They did this three times (4 x 3 = 12 barrels, a barrel for a tribe). As a result, the trench was flooded. By involving the people, Elijah let them see that the water was real.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to see this event as it actually happened? After all the vain and frenzied efforts of the 450 prophets of Baal from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. without getting an answer, Elijah quickly finished the dramatization in the waning daylight. The people would be watching his every movement with intense interest. When Elijah instructed them to saturate the bullock, they thought that he was making it more difficult for the true God to answer by fire.

1 Kings 18:36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

1 Kings 18:37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

Around 3 p.m., Elijah offered a short prayer: “LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it

be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.” This *brief and simple* prayer is contrasted with *six hours* of praying and wild actions by the 450 false prophets. We can be sure that Elijah’s voice was *powerful* and that the people knew he was praying on their behalf. His criticism was constructive. He prayed that they would know Jehovah is the true God.

The people had been seeing this enactment all day without food or rest, and now Elijah was taking them into his custody. As their mouthpiece, he called to Jehovah to open their eyes to see that He is “the LORD God,” and not the false gods they had been worshipping.

1 Kings 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

Jehovah answered by fire. “The fire of the LORD fell, and [not only] consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood ... [but also] the stones, and the dust [debris], and licked up the water that was in the trench.” In other words, the fire consumed everything, including the 12 stones, and even scorched the ground. The water in the trench was completely dried up.

1 Kings 18:39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

The people fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.”

1 Kings 18:40 And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

Elijah gave the commandment to “take the prophets of Baal,” all 450 of them. Then he brought the false prophets “down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.” Whether or not Elijah personally killed all 450 prophets, the people were certainly willing to cooperate, for they had seen, by the enactment, that Jehovah was God. The point is that the false prophets were slain according to Elijah’s command.

Comment: It is good to go over the details of this account, for Revelation 13:13,14 alludes to this incident of fire coming down from heaven. “And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh *fire* come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” Reviewing the type helps to put us on guard against what will happen when there is a *powerful* fulfillment by the two-horned beast. However, the difference with regard to the coming fulfillment is that the people will react *against* the Lord’s *true* people. The “miracle” will help the *false* side.

Reply: Yes, the miraculous nature of the sign that is indicated in Revelation 13:13,14 will convince the public that the Lord’s *true* people are *false*—just the *opposite* of the type.

Comment: In the type, the holy angels were very busy preventing the fallen angels from answering for Baal.

Reply: Yes, no interference was allowed by the fallen angels, for the moment was holy in the type.

1 Kings 18:41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

Elijah told Ahab to get up and eat and drink, for there was “a sound of abundance of rain”; that is, thunder in the distance indicated rain was on the way. Elijah was solicitous for Ahab, for apparently, the king had not eaten all day. While the contest was going on, he was attentively absorbed as a spectator from morning until late afternoon, when fire came down and consumed Elijah’s sacrifice. Then the 450 prophets of Baal were slaughtered.

1 Kings 18:42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

Ahab went to eat and drink. Elijah had descended the mountain in connection with the slaying of the false prophets, and now he returned to the top of Carmel. There he assumed a praying posture by falling down on his knees and placing his forehead between his knees. To a certain degree, Mount Carmel is like a tabletop, or a plateau, from which the Mediterranean Sea could be viewed in those days.

1 Kings 18:43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

Elijah told his servant to go and look toward the sea. From where Elijah was praying, he could not see the sea, so the servant went farther and higher in the mount, for the northwest portion was more elevated. When the servant saw nothing and returned, Elijah instructed him to look six more times, that is, until he had gone a total of seven times.

Comment: The King James wording sounds as if the servant looked eight times: “Go *again* seven times.”

Reply: “Seven times” was the customary way of speaking, so we need to orient ourselves to Bible thinking and language. It is obvious that Elijah meant a total of seven times because “seven” is the sacred number, and it indicates completion. The expectation was that the servant would see something the seventh time. The first time the servant looked was just a test to show there was nothing out of the ordinary, and then he went six more times. Another example of “seven times” was when Naaman, the Syrian general, had to bathe seven times in the Jordan River in order to be cleansed of his leprosy.

Q: Verse 43 is the first mention of the fact that Elijah had a servant. The Hebrew word *naar*, translated “servant,” refers to a young person, a youth. Could this “servant” be someone who was so impressed with the contest with the false prophets of Baal that he then joined himself to Elijah and wanted to help him?

A: Elijah was a Tishbite from the land of Gilead. Schools of the prophets existed at that time and earlier. Of those schools, certain individuals emerged as recognized prophets as time went on, and the rest remained on a secondary level. Evidently, as has been suggested by some Christian expositors, this young man who accompanied Elijah was a trainee from one of those schools. He had attached himself to Elijah out of respect for the prophet.

1 Kings 18:44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

The seventh time the servant saw a cloud formation shaped like a man's hand, or *fist*, arise out of the sea. The time setting was at the end of the 3 1/2 years of drought, or antitypically at the end of the 1,260 years from 539 to 1799. It was not unusual for a little cloud to arise from the sea, but the timing and the shape of the cloud were unusual. The cloud was miraculously seen after the defeat of the false prophets, and to Elijah, it was an indication that rain was coming, that is, the end of the drought. Thunder was associated with the rain. In the antitype, the cloud (trouble) that arose out of the sea (the anarchistic masses) represented the French Revolution, which was a mini-picture of the great Time of Trouble to occur at the end, or in the seventh period, of the Gospel Age. Shortly after the end of the French Revolution, Bible societies printed Bibles in great quantities. In other words, just as thunder *preceded* the rain, so the French Revolution *preceded* the Bible societies, the "rain" of truth.

Evidently, Ahab was down on a lower level, but he was still higher than the plain. Elijah instructed his servant to tell Ahab, "Prepare your chariot, and get down to the plain so that the rain will not stop you." How would the rain have stopped Ahab?

Comment: The chariot wheels would have dragged in the mud.

Reply: If the rain came down like a cloudburst, it would have impeded the speed of the chariot, and Ahab would have gone home in a fashion unbecoming a king.

Also, to a certain extent, Elijah honored and paid respect to the *office* of king. A Christian should follow the same principle, for even though his first loyalty is to God, he is to be a respectful alien in the country where he resides.

1 Kings 18:45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

The storm came quickly. "The heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a *great* rain." The implication is that Ahab got caught in the rain, but at least he had made a rapid departure and was apparently well on his way before the deluge came down. He rode in his chariot to Jezreel in Megiddo.

1 Kings 18:46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

Elijah "girded up his loins"; that is, he pulled up, or double-folded, his long garments with a girdle so that he could run without the flow of the garments impeding his progress.

Comment: Elijah had help in covering the distance, for the "hand of the LORD" was on him. Apparently, Elijah was translated to hurry him along.

Reply: Yes. It was customary at times when the king traveled to have trained men running before the chariot. However, on this occasion, not only was Ahab's chariot moving with speed, but also he had a head start. Nevertheless, Elijah caught up to Ahab and ran before him.

1 Kings 19:1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

1 Kings 19:2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.

Ahab arrived in Jezreel where Jezebel was and explained to her the events of the day. When he

came to the result of the climax of the contest—namely, that “all the prophets” had been slain with the sword—we can imagine the impact on her.

Comment: Jezebel was not thankful for the rain.

Reply: She drew a completely wrong lesson. Instead of seeing that Jehovah had been signally honored and appreciating Him as the only and true God by the miraculous demonstration, she was now determined to slay Elijah.

Incidentally, when Elijah’s sacrifice was consumed, there was a *purposed order* of consumption, as stated in 1 Kings 18:38. “Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” First, Elijah saturated the altar with water from a nearby well to prove there was no deception or any secret fire underneath the altar. Then, to demonstrate the *miraculous* nature of the consumption by fire, the sacrifice burned first, *before* the wood, which was the reverse of the usual order. The sequence of consumption was (1) sacrifice, (2) wood, (3) stones, (4) dust (scorching the earth), and (5) drying up the water in the trench around the altar. Thus there was a double emphasis on the miraculous nature of the consumption.

In anger, Jezebel wanted to vent her spleen on Elijah, so she sent a messenger to him there in Jezreel. No doubt Elijah was expecting some positive results from the contest, thinking that the defeat of the 450 false prophets would convince everyone of God’s power. Thus he anticipated the conversion of the nation and even of Jezebel, as he waited to see the results of the communication between Ahab and his wife.

When the messenger arrived, he probably spoke strongly, imitating Jezebel’s wrath. “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them [the slain 450 prophets of Baal] by tomorrow about this time.” Why didn’t Jezebel send messengers out to apprehend and slay Elijah immediately?

Comment: Fearing the reaction of the people, she wanted to kill him in her own way and time.

Reply: The people were still exuberant about the contest, but she felt the enthusiasm and the power of the event would abate enough by the next day that she could pursue her intent.

And there is another point. Elijah had to be very bold to even suggest the contest to Ahab, for he was being hunted as a fugitive, and great efforts had been made to apprehend him. Elijah’s going to Ahab of his own volition was almost like going voluntarily to the guillotine. Upon seeing Elijah, Ahab had said in anger, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17). Elijah had replied, “No, you and Jezebel are the problem.” Hence, because of Elijah’s boldness and courage, Jezebel anticipated that he would be in Jezreel the next day, but instead he unexpectedly fled (verse 3). And in this flight, other things would happen.

If Elijah had taken advantage of that moment of success following the contest and continued to act with the same power, he might have been very successful. However, the time was not right, and God foresaw how the situation would work out. Elijah’s fleeing was providential, for it was meant to be a picture. In other words, from a negative standpoint, the French Revolution seemed to be Satan’s victory, and from a positive standpoint, the breaking of the chains of bondage was God’s victory. Other pictures show that God stopped the time of trouble back there because it was premature. The great Time of Trouble down at this end of the age will eventually open the doors of the Kingdom. Therefore, by Elijah’s fleeing, his experiences became a type of what has happened since the French Revolution.

Thus Jezebel expected Elijah to be on hand the next day because she felt he was an intrepid person. However, it was overruled that her servant narrated her threat strongly, with spirit and power, so that it would make Elijah fearful. No doubt his fear was based on the expectation that the results of the miraculous contest would bring debasement to Jezebel and honor to him from King Ahab, who had been an eyewitness. Therefore, Elijah was startled by this turn of events, where his life was now being threatened.

1 Kings 19:3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

Elijah arose and fled for his life to Beer-sheba, where he left his servant. Beer-sheba was the southern tip of what was considered the civilized portion of Judah. Stark desert lay beyond. Elijah had nothing to fear in going through Judah because the authority of Ahab and Jezebel was in the northern kingdom. However, in thinking from a human standpoint, Elijah could have reasoned that perhaps they would make overtures to the king of Judah and eventually be effective in snaring him if he did not go all the way to Beer-sheba and even a little beyond. But why did Elijah leave his servant?

Comment: Elijah did not want to jeopardize the life of his servant.

Reply: Yes. Also, he would be less conspicuous if he traveled alone.

1 Kings 19:4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

After leaving his servant at Beer-sheba, the last civilized outpost, Elijah continued on alone and "went a day's journey into the wilderness." There he sat down under a juniper or broom tree and asked to die. A shadow cast by such vegetation was a welcome relief to a person in the desert. Elijah requested, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." He was discouraged at the seeming failure of his mission in spite of the miraculous outcome of the contest.

1 Kings 19:5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

Weary from discouragement and faint in heart and spirit, Elijah lay down and slept under the juniper tree. But as he lay and slept, an angel touched him, and said, "Arise and eat."

1 Kings 19:6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

As Elijah looked, he saw "a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head." He ate and drank and then lay down and slept again, as previously. Evidently, the angel disappeared after preparing this meal for him.

1 Kings 19:7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

The angel returned a second time and woke up Elijah and told him to eat because the journey was too great for him. Although this second meal is not described, there was apparently a greater quantity of food, for he needed strength for a long journey.

1 Kings 19:8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

Elijah arose and ate and drank. In the strength of this heartier meal, he went 40 days and 40 nights to Mount Horeb. Before discussing the antitype, we will briefly review the type.

At the end of the drought, Elijah fled from Jezebel and went a day's journey into the wilderness and slept under a juniper or broom tree. When he awoke, he ate a baked cake and drank a cruse of water, both of which represent dispensational truth. Then Elijah lay down and went to sleep again. The angel woke Elijah up the second time and gave him another meal, a more substantial one, so that he would have the strength to go on a long journey for 40 days and nights. Now we will go back and consider the antitypical events that preceded these two meals.

At the end of the contest with the 450 prophets of Baal, the drought of 3 1/2 years also ended, picturing in the antitype the year 1799, the end of the long 1,260-year period of famine for the Word of God. The time periods indicated after Elijah fled from Jezebel in Jezreel are (1) the day's journey into the wilderness when he separated from his servant and (2) the 40 days and nights of travel, which represent, respectively, one year and 40 years. What are the 40 years in the antitype?

Comment: The 40 years covered the Pastor's ministry, which extended from 1876 to 1916.

Reply: In other words, after the second meal, Elijah had to travel for 40 days and nights before he arrived at Mount Sinai.

If the second meal represents the Harvest message, which was a 40-year period, the first meal is comparable to the ministry of William Miller, which began in 1829. Bro. Russell gave him credit, explaining that the little book in the angel's hand represents truth first unfolded by Miller (Rev. 10:2). However, the picture continues on into the Pastor's ministry, during which the winds were held back and much dispensational truth came forth. Thus there were *two* sleeps and *two* awakenings. In the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, there was only *one* sleep (Matt. 25:1-13). Thus a time frame is being suggested that needs harmonization. But, first, we will discuss where Elijah ended up, namely, at Mount Horeb, or Mount Sinai, which represents the Kingdom.

The prevailing opinion was that the Church would be complete in 1914, and then, based on the parallels with the Jewish harvest, the date was subsequently changed to 1918. Jerusalem and Herod's Temple were destroyed in AD 69, but not until 3 1/2 years later, or AD 73, did Masada and another fort fall. Therefore, the Pastor thought the possibility existed that the Harvest might not end until 1918 because the work was prospering and progressing in greater numbers and interest in 1916 than it did prior to 1914. But in the type, Elijah's life continued after he got to Mount Horeb; that is, the pictures that pertain to Elijah did not end at Mount Sinai. Rather, only *one phase* of his life ended there. In studying Elijah in 1 Kings, we first hear of him in connection with the drought of 3 1/2 years and his fleeing from Jezebel. He seemingly came out of nowhere, even though his ministry began earlier, and he already had a reputation as a prophet.

Thus far we have a sequence of some dates—for example, 1799 at the end of the 1,260 years and the 40 years of the Harvest. Even though there are time gaps, Elijah's life, like our Lord's last week, is a panorama of the end of the age.

The first episode after 1799 pertained to the Millerite movement. Therefore, the broom tree under which Elijah slept is significant. It was suggested at a Future Events Conference that the

broom tree indicates the sweeping, or cleansing, of the sanctuary in 1846. Elijah's being awakened from the second sleep shows that the Lord's people needed additional dispensational truth, especially after the disappointment of the Millerite movement in 1844 when Jesus did not return. The second meal, which corresponds to the Harvest message, brings us up to 1914.

Q: In Sinai, the Israelites were given a double portion of manna on the sixth day, which fed them on the seventh day. Is there a connection with the two meals here in 1 Kings 19?

A: Yes, there can be a connection. Those who lived during the earlier part of the Pastor's ministry benefited from the food of both the Millerite movement and the new dispensation.

We believe that Elijah ended up in the same mount (Sinai) as Moses when he left Egypt with the Israelites and journeyed to the "mount of God" (Exod. 18:5; 24:13). Since Horeb and Sinai are the same mount, "Horeb" may have been used here in 1 Kings 19:8 to avoid confusion with the Sinai in the Book of Hebrews. "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest" (Heb. 12:18). A few verses later, the Apostle Paul said, "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:22,23). Paul spoke prophetically of Mount Sinai as being the destination of the Christian's hope, for when the Church is complete and glorified, there will be a general assembly of the saints at the *true* antitypical Mount Sinai, which is the same as Mount Horeb. We believe the Holy Spirit used the word "Horeb" because the hope in 1914 that the Church would be complete in that year turned out to be a disappointment. In the type, when Elijah arrived at Mount Horeb, he was disappointed, as will be seen in upcoming verses. Thus Mount Horeb represents the year 1914.

Q: Why does Hebrews 12:22 say, "But ye are come unto mount Zion," not "unto mount Sinai"?

A: Paul discussed the covenants in the same epistle and contrasted the old Law Covenant with the New Covenant. "Zion" would be *spiritual* Zion, not the literal Mount Zion. The point is that there was *expectation and then disappointment*.

1 Kings 19:9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

When Elijah lodged in a cave, God asked him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" The prophet had to give a reason.

1 Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Elijah said in effect, "I am a fugitive. The children of Israel have slain your prophets with the sword, and I am the only one left. Ahab and Jezebel want to kill me; they are seeking my life."

1 Kings 19:11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:

1 Kings 19:12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

An (implied) angel of the Lord instructed Elijah, “Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD.” Then Jehovah passed by. Before discussing what Elijah saw, we will consider the following similarities in the experiences of Elijah and Moses.

1. Elijah and Moses both fasted for 40 days and nights without food.
2. Both fled for their lives. Moses, picturing the Ancient Worthies, fled from Egypt, a symbol of the world. Elijah, representing the Little Flock, fled from the wrath of Jezebel (Papacy).
3. Both fled to Sinai. (The first time Moses fled in fear for his life; the second time, in the Exodus, he fled without fear.)
4. Both stood up for principle.
5. Both had a vision on Mount Sinai. Moses saw a pattern of the Tabernacle, and Elijah saw the Time of Trouble.
6. Both boldly confronted the king. Moses confronted Pharaoh prior to the Exodus; Elijah spoke boldly to King Ahab.
7. Both saw the Lord God in vision (Exod. 24:9,10; 1 Kings 19:11,12).
8. Both were seen in vision on the Mount of Transfiguration.
9. Both had an experience with a great wind (Moses at the Red Sea when the wind divided the waters, and Elijah at Mount Horeb when the wind split the rocks).
10. Both were prophets. Some have felt that Moses was the prophet of the Pentateuch and the “law” and that Elijah was the prophet of the “testimony” (Isa. 8:20).
11. Their bodies were not found.
12. The lives of both provide chronological experiences of the true Church. Elijah represents the true Church *in sequence* during the Gospel Age.

Incidentally, there were also similarities in the lives of Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. For example, in addition to none of their bodies being found, Jesus’ last week provides a sequence of events for the feet members. Therefore, it is appropriate that Moses and Elijah represent “Christlike” classes of the Old Testament and the New Testament, respectively.

What we are trying to say is that many have read the Old Testament but do not treat the life of Elijah prophetically. Instead they consider it from the standpoint of principles. They fail to see any dispensational truth, whereas Elijah is one of the most prominent individuals along that line. For instance, Isaiah’s and Ezekiel’s lives are not prophetic in the same way, and only in certain places does Jeremiah picture the Church at the end of the age—and *not* in sequence. Thus Elijah’s life stands out as being very, very peculiar in that it has a *sequential* character.

Elijah had the blessing of seeing the Lord pass by and a mighty and strong wind rend the rocks. Then followed, in sequence, an earthquake, a fire, and a still, small voice. Proof that these were sequential are the words “*after the wind,*” “*after the earthquake,*” and “*after the fire.*” In contrast, the stone smiting the image in Daniel 2:35 is not sequential. “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces *together*, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them.” Some overdraw the picture by saying that sequentially (1) the image was smitten in 1914, (2) it is being ground to powder ever since, and then (3) the wind will come and blow the powder away. However, the smiting of the image emphasizes the *suddenness* and *completeness* of the overthrow, or destruction, whereas the Elijah vision is sequential. One proof is that the wind is first in the Elijah vision, and it is last in the Daniel picture. The smiting of the image can be likened to the explosion of a hydrogen bomb in which all these things happen in a moment, all at once, and with no particular sequence, for “*no place*” will henceforth be found for the iron, clay, brass, silver, and gold. Elijah’s vision suggests the passage of a little time, whereas the

Daniel picture shows suddenness.

The earthquake and the fire of the Elijah vision will occur in quick succession: earthquake-fire! We are not speaking of the tremors that precede an earthquake but the earthquake itself. A *violent volcanic explosion* of a mountain (such as Mount Vesuvius) *ruptures* the surface of the earth with *great force*. In contrast, benign occasional tremors can exist in an area for hundreds of years without an eruption.

The great earthquake of Elijah's vision is still future. What we see today is still the wind rending the rocks—the splitting up and the changing of kingdoms. The wind rends the mountains and breaks the rocks in pieces for a period of time. Later will come the earthquake, of which the fire is a component. An earthquake causes flowing fiery lava that destroys whatever is in its path. The rending of the rocks, the winds of war, have been going on since 1914. Thus there is a sequence, but the stone has not yet smitten the image.

The “still small voice,” the last phase, will follow the fire of anarchy. There is no real time frame as to when the still, small voice will occur. It represents the antitypical time when the Lord will say, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psa. 46:10). In another picture, Jesus stood up in the boat on the Sea of Galilee and rebuked the wind and the waves with the words “Peace, be still,” and “there was a great calm,” showing the establishment of the Kingdom (Mark 4:39).

In summation, on Mount Horeb, Elijah received a *preview of coming events*. The proof is that he was *here during all the phases*—not only for the first three phases of wind, earthquake, and fire but also for the still, small voice. Since the Little Flock *will be beyond the veil* from the earthquake phase on, Elijah's vision has to be a *preview*. While the Pastor did write on Revelation 12 and 13 and gave some generalities in the earlier part of his ministry, there was nothing explicit. However, at the end of his ministry, he wrote a lot about Elijah and Elisha. Thus the study of Elijah's life as a type assumes importance.

Q: The “wind” is thought of as being in the plural, but the account says “a great and strong wind” (*singular*) and “the LORD was not in the wind.” We usually think of three World Wars, but is there a special emphasis on the last one? Is there a significance to the singular “wind”?

A: It is a *continuing* wind rather than separate blasts. Thinking of World War I as the first wind and World War II as the second wind is an artificial prop for convenience' sake. The “wind” includes the breaking up of kingdoms (great and small), strife, conflict, and trouble ever since World War I. Many worldly writers point out 1914 as the beginning of all the problems in modern civilization. But in all of these eruptions, the stone is not coming to the fore. In fact, it is receding because God and the Bible have been given less and less reverence and respect since 1914.

Q: Why was God in the still, small voice but not in the wind, earthquake, and fire? Other Scriptures say that God is in the trouble, so what is the distinction here?

A: God is a God of *love*. Since that is His *preferred* disposition, His character is best shown in His peaceable nature. It will be *God's* day of vengeance, but when the Kingdom is established, He will be vindicated for having waited so long and for letting so many things happen.

1 Kings 19:13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

Elijah had been in a cave, but he went and stood in the entrance when God called him,

evidently with the “still small voice.” (He had just seen the Lord pass by and the wind, earthquake, and fire.) Now, out of humility and reverence, he wrapped his face in his mantle. He did not feel worthy of such an experience.

Comment: In comparing verses 9, 11, and 13, we see that Elijah must have retreated back into the cave and lodged there. When he heard God’s voice telling him to come forth, he went and stood at the entrance of the cave. From there, he saw the wind, earthquake, and fire. Because of the awesomeness of these phenomena, he must have gone back into the cave a little way, and now, upon hearing the still, small voice, he wrapped his face in his mantle and came back out and stood in the entrance of the cave.

Reply: Yes, and wrapping his face in his mantle indicates that he hearkened to God’s instruction in a spirit of reverence, godly fear, and humility. Then a voice came unto Elijah, saying, “What are you doing here?”

1 Kings 19:14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Elijah replied, “I have been very jealous for the LORD God because the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and slain your prophets. Now I alone am left, and they seek to kill me.”

Comment: Verse 14 is a repeat of verse 10. Elijah made the same statement both *before and after* the preview of coming events.

Reply: Not only did Elijah say, “I only, am left,” but he also said, “They seek my life, to take it away.” Before discussing this statement, we will make another observation.

In the *Reprints* on pages 4211-4212, dated 1908, a letter was printed from Bro. C. E. Fowler, and up to a certain point, it is in remarkable agreement with the comments we have already presented. He wrote that since the 1,260 days represent a time period ending in 1799, couldn’t the subsequent events of Elijah’s life up to when he went to Mount Horeb also represent some sort of dispensational picture? He filled in the gap with the Millerite movement from 1829 to 1844, the cleansing of the sanctuary from 1846, the sleep ending in 1874, and then the Harvest period from 1874 to 1914. With the letter being written in 1908, he was saying that Mount Horeb, 1914, would be the fruition of the Church’s hopes—the time when the saints would meet and see God. And that was the expectation of the brethren at that time. They looked forward to 1914 as being the end of the age and the completion of the Church. Bro. Fowler mentioned the 40-day journey, which Elijah took in the strength of the second meal, as being from 1874 to 1914. Of course he implied that the angel who provided the meal was Bro. Russell.

Now we will discuss Elijah’s statement “I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” It so happened that World War I took place between 1914 and 1918, and many brethren in this country and in Europe went to prison for not participating in that war. The brethren believed that the end of the Church’s earthly career and the setting up of the Kingdom were imminent. Meanwhile, the Pastor died in 1916, but when the years 1914-1918 passed and the consecrated were still here, the doctrine was promulgated that the door to the high calling was closed and that only those already consecrated were Spirit-begotten. Hence these brethren felt they were the only individuals left. In addition, many left the truth and went back into the world when the expectations of 1914 were not realized.

If we put ourselves back in that situation, we can see that those who were incarcerated as

conscientious objectors thought the end of the age had come. Possibly, therefore, Elijah's feeling that he was alone in connection with his stay at Mount Horeb represents this type of thinking and the date 1914. In subsequent verses, God commanded Elijah to depart from Sinai and go up to Damascus to do an anointing work.

Q: Since Pastor Russell went off the scene in 1916 and the 40 days and nights (that is, years) of the Harvest period took Elijah up to 1914 or 1918, wouldn't the work starting with verse 15 indicate a *further* work to be done by the consecrated *after* the Pastor's death? In other words, the Pastor's work did not include the anointings.

A: The charge was to continue on and do another work, for certainly the anointings of Hazael and Jehu were not understood during the 40-year Harvest period. However, it is interesting that these anointings were discussed in the Society, for it was felt that Jonadab, Jehu, etc., were important pictures. Although the pictures were considered only in a superficial sense, there was interest.

Comment: The commission to do the anointings should be a signal to us now to watch for a special work to be done by the lingering consecrated at the very end of the age. Elijah will get the credit, even though he is off the scene, for he leaves behind a mantle for Elisha.

Reply: Yes, *God* gave a commission to Elijah to go to Damascus and do the anointings, and the work will be accredited to him.

1 Kings 19:15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:

1 Kings 19:16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

God instructed Elijah, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you arrive, anoint [1] Hazael to be king over Syria, [2] Jehu to be king over Israel, and [3] Elisha to be prophet in your place." In other words, Elijah was to leave Mount Horeb and go to the wilderness of Damascus and accomplish three works.

Later, in 2 Kings 2, four places are mentioned—Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan—but are they in relation to Damascus, Syria? The fact these places are only about halfway shows that Elijah started out on his journey, but his career ended when he reached the Jerusalem area by the Jordan River, so he never got to anoint Hazael. However, since Elisha subsequently anointed Hazael, we would assume that Elijah discussed the matter with him. Elijah must have revealed to Elisha what the Lord had commissioned to be done. Stated another way, Elijah realized that he himself would not be carrying out the commission.

At first, the sequence of anointings, with Elisha being last, seems to be out of order. However, the Pastor gave the clue that Elisha has a dual application: first, the Great Company and, second, the Ancient Worthies.

Also, notice how specific the instruction was with the names being given in advance. As far as we know, Elijah had had no previous contact with these individuals. (1) Hazael would be anointed the king over Syria *before* he came into office. (2) As a result of the anointing *in advance*, Jehu, the son of Nimshi, would become the king over Israel. (3) Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, would be anointed to occupy the office of prophet instead of Elijah, that is, *after* Elijah's departure. Elisha would then act like Elijah.

Q: The “wilderness of Damascus” was a new destination after Mount Sinai. If Sinai represents Kingdom hopes, what does the *wilderness* of Damascus represent?

A: In the type, the term refers to the route that Elijah would take. He had come down from Beer-sheba to Horeb, but there was another route. That route, the King’s Highway, was on the east side of the Dead Sea, and it went up to Damascus. Spiritually speaking, the “wilderness of Damascus” pertains to the end of the age and the troublesome conditions that will take place in connection with the anointings, especially of Hazael and Jehu. There will be a weeding-out process.

Comment: The detail with regard to Hazael and Jehu indicates that God will handpick the individuals who are in power and do these works at the end of the age.

Reply: Yes, for normally speaking, Jehu, a *captain* in the army, would never be the king of Israel. Nor would Hazael, who was like a private secretary for Ben-hadad, become the king of Syria.

1 Kings 19:17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

The same sequence is given for the escapees. In other words, the escapees from one class would subsequently be victimized and thinned out by Jehu, and that remnant would be slain by Elisha. Stated another way, those who escape from Hazael will be caught and executed, as it were, by Jehu, and those who escape from Jehu will be caught by Elisha. This class will be apprehended in stages. After the first slaying, there will be a remnant. After the second slaying, there will be a smaller remnant. And when Elisha’s work is done, all of this class will have been slain. It is interesting that the account in 2 Kings does not tell of Elisha’s slaying anyone. However, there is a reason for the omission. There is no record because Elisha is a double type, and the Ancient Worthies will accomplish the final work in the Kingdom Age.

1 Kings 19:18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

Now, after giving the commission to do the anointings, God answered Elijah’s statement about being the only one left. God said, “I have left ... seven thousand in Israel ... which have not bowed unto Baal, and ... kissed him.” Baal was emblemized by two golden calves in northern Israel, one in Dan and the other in Bethel. The people who came to either place of worship kissed the statue of the calf to show their subservience and devotion to Baal worship. Hosea 13:2 tells of the Israelites’ kissing the golden calves: “And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.”

Likewise, Roman Catholics kiss a black bronze statue of the Apostle Peter sitting in a chair. The theory is that Peter was the first pope, so a statue of him was put in St. Peter’s in Rome. Because so many people kissed the statute, the nose was gradually becoming flat. Therefore, as a way of preventing disfigurement, the statue was put on a pedestal that was about shoulder-high, and the bottom of the chair rested on the platform, or pedestal. The people continued to kiss the statue, but now they kissed the feet. As a result, the toes were worn away by millions of Catholics over several hundred years.

Q: Do the 7,000 represent the Great Company?

A: Yes. If Elijah represents the Little Flock, then the 7,000 would be those other than the Little

Flock who had not bowed the knee to Baal. For a person to bow the knee to and kiss Baal means that he is identified with Baal (Papacy, the nominal system) in spirit. That the 7,000 represent the Great Company is confirmed in 1 Kings 20:15.

1 Kings 19:19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

Elijah found Elisha plowing with “twelve yoke” of oxen, that is, 24 oxen, for two animals are usually in a yoke. Of course other men would have been with Elisha, for it is unreasonable to think that 24 oxen pulled one plow. Elisha was industrious and actively working in the field. With the 24 oxen being symbolic of the 24 books of the Old Testament, representing the Word of God, Elisha pictures the preponderant number of “Bible Students” that will be of the Great Company class. The Little Flock is *little*, even among us. The suggestion is that Elisha was *behind* the oxen, thus being with the twelfth yoke.

Elijah passed by Elisha and “cast his mantle upon him.” This act was not a real anointing, for Elijah only temporarily put his mantle on Elisha and then took it back. (We know that Elijah kept the mantle at this time, for later he wrapped it up and smote the waters of the river Jordan.) Therefore, casting the mantle on Elisha was a premonition of something that would happen later; namely, Elisha became the successor when the mantle fell from Elijah at his translation (2 Kings 2:11-14). At that time, the mantle *of authority* became the property of Elisha.

Comment: The prophetic significance fits the antitype because, generally speaking, the Elijah class will be better informed on prophetic matters than the Elisha class.

Q: What is a mantle?

A: It is a cloak, an outer garment. In the antitype, the mantle is the authority of God’s Word.

1 Kings 19:20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

After Elijah cast his mantle on Elisha and took it back, he continued on. Then Elisha left the oxen and ran after him.

Comment: Some portion of the Spirit of the Lord must have come on Elisha at that time.

Reply: Yes, in part.

Comment: Elijah’s reputation would have been known following the contest with the 450 prophets of Baal. Therefore, it would be an honor for anyone who had holy intentions to be personally recognized by that great prophet.

Reply: An opportunity, a favor, was being extended to Elisha by silent language, or in symbol. Elijah did not stop to instruct him and have a lengthy discussion. He just picked up his mantle and went on.

Elijah’s leaving suggests a silent message: “Elisha, if you do not do something, you are going to lose this opportunity.” What did Elisha do next? He *ran* after Elijah, *but he said*, “Let me ... kiss my father and my mother [first], and then I will follow thee.” His words show a Great Company attitude, to which Elijah replied, “Go back again: for what have I done to thee?”

Comment: Elisha's attitude reminds us of what Jesus said in Matthew 8:22, "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead."

Comment: Elijah's acting *silently* regarding the mantle shows there is *no coercion*. We are each *individually* responsible as to whether or not we have a sufficiency of zeal.

Reply: It also shows that there is no calling to the Great Company. This class will not be recognized in a prophetic sense until the Little Flock is off the scene, for there is only the one high calling (Eph. 4:4). After the Church is complete, a class of the consecrated will be left. The Lord will then deal with the Great Company as a class. In fact, that is another reason for Elijah's silence—because no specific call is enunciated to the Great Company.

In the antitype, this incident with Elisha occurred subsequent to 1914. The account tells of Elisha's family, but it does not say where he lived. The indefiniteness leaves open the fact that a Great Company class would be born after 1914.

Comment: Since Elisha did not come on the scene until after 1914 in the antitype, the suggestion seems to be that a greater number or proportion of Great Company exists in the Harvest period (that is, in Laodicea) than in the other six periods of the Church. Although they are not recognized as a class until after the Elijah class is translated, the Lord knows who they are, and they predominate.

1 Kings 19:21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

Elisha slew a yoke of oxen as a farewell dinner. Although the Hebrew allows either thought, the two oxen were probably roasted (barbecue style) because boiling would take too long.

Comment: First, Elisha just wanted to go back and kiss his parents good-by, but to take a yoke of oxen and slay, prepare, and roast the animals took *time*. Moreover, this was a large feast for "the people"—more than his parents. His actions show an entanglement with the world rather than full zeal for the Lord.

The "instruments" were the wooden yoke. The yoke was used as fuel for roasting the oxen.

1 Kings 20:1 And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.

1 Kings 20:2 And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad,

1 Kings 20:3 Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.

1 Kings 20:4 And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.

1 Kings 20:5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children;

1 Kings 20:6 Yet I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.

Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, confronted Ahab, the king of the ten tribes, and announced that Israel's gold, silver, wives, children, and their best were his. Imagine being an Israelite and hearing such a request! When Ahab agreed, Ben-hadad sent the messengers a second time and strengthened his demand, saying that the Syrians would search the houses of the Israelites and their servants and take whatever pleased them. Ben-hadad's abnormal requests show that he was seeking "mischief" (verse 7). Obviously, his making such demands was an act of war.

Ahab's reply may have been a stalling tactic. Under this circumstance, he may have given this reply so that the king of Syria would not immediately take steps to charge and enter the city. With a conciliatory reply, Ahab felt there would be time for him to collect his thoughts. From a worldly standpoint, to have given in to these demands without some resistance would have been insanity.

1 Kings 20:7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not.

1 Kings 20:8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent.

1 Kings 20:9 Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

1 Kings 20:10 And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

1 Kings 20:11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.

1 Kings 20:12 And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.

All the elders and all the people told Ahab not to agree to the second demand. Ahab sent that message back to Ben-hadad: "Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Being drunk, Ben-hadad told his servants, in anger, to set themselves in battle array.

What would these events represent, if they have a prophetic application? This chapter paints a background picture of the circumstances that were happening at this time in the northern kingdom and in Syria, that is, before Hazael was anointed instead of Ben-hadad.

Q: This chapter, which does not mention either Elijah or Elisha, is a parenthetical insert similar to the Micaiah account in 1 Kings 22. Since there were three battles between the northern kingdom and Syria, of which this battle was the first, could they picture three World Wars in the antitype?

A: We think they do picture three World Wars, but how to explain them is the problem. The setting is in Europe, and Ahab represents civil power that is related to Jezebel, or Catholicism. Both World War I and World War II were against Germany. Although the United States got involved later, these two World Wars were especially fought in Europe as a whole.

Q: Would Ben-hadad of Syria represent a trend toward socialism, for this trend kept getting stronger and stronger, and the so-called Christian nations did not deal with it properly?

A: In other words, fascism, nazism, and communism were all new forms of government that were supposedly of the people. Ostensibly, socialism shares the wealth (as was illustrated by Ben-hadad's wanting the gold, silver, wives, children, etc.), but of course those in leadership positions manipulate these idealistic goals to their own ends. In the type, these confrontations took place either previously or while Elijah was making his way to Damascus. The account is giving us a background picture.

Q: Please explain verse 8 again: "And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent."

A: Both the common people and the "elders," or leaders, of the other nations in Europe did not give in to Germany's demands but resisted and fought a war instead.

Q: Is the thought that Ben-hadad's besieging Samaria and making such unreasonable demands are a picture of World War I?

A: Yes, those circumstances brought about that particular conflict. The *ten* tribes of Israel picture the nations of Europe. The Syrian power represents a philosophy that was engendered whereby Bavarian rulership in Germany came into existence. That Black Forest portion of Germany had *militant* soldiers. Hitler later took advantage of them, but in World War I, they were the backbone of the German army.

1 Kings 20:13 And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

The prophet was purposely not named so that this parenthetical account in chapter 20 would not interfere with the Elijah-Elisha picture and sequence. The war was between King Ahab of Israel and Ben-hadad of Syria.

1 Kings 20:14 And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou.

1 Kings 20:15 Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.

Ahab was to order the battle and number the "young men of the princes of the provinces" for battle. There were 232 princes. After that, he numbered "all the children of Israel," and their number was 7,000—a very strange enumeration. Eventually the Israelites routed Ben-hadad, and he and his forces fled.

Verse 27 again refers to the two groupings of princes and people: "And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them [the Syrians]: and the children of

Israel pitched before them like *two little flocks of kids [goats]*; but the Syrians filled the country.” One “flock,” the 232 “princes of the provinces,” represents the Little Flock. The other “flock,” the people, the 7,000 “children of Israel,” represents the Great Company (compare 1 Kings 19:18). The two flocks who went out in the forefront to battle against the great host of Syrians were called “little” because they were so outnumbered.

1 Kings 20:16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.

Being very confident of victory and feeling they had nothing to fear, Ben-hadad and the 32 kings who were with him were relaxed and got drunk.

1 Kings 20:17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.

1 Kings 20:18 And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.

According to the numbering by Ahab in harmony with the prophet’s declaration, the 232 princes of Israel went out first. When Ben-hadad was informed that these men had come out of Samaria, the ten-tribe kingdom, he commanded that whether they wanted peace or war, his forces were to “take them alive.”

1 Kings 20:19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.

Here is a significant statement—the “young men of the princes of the provinces [that is, the Little Flock] ... and the *army* [the 7,000, the Great Company] which followed them,” came out of the city against the Syrians.

1 Kings 20:20 And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse with the horsemen.

1 Kings 20:21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

Syria was defeated, but Ben-hadad “escaped on an horse with the horsemen.” Notice that the king of Israel joined in this battle.

At the present time, we are not able to harmonize these pictures of World War I and World War II with the Little Flock and the Great Company fighting and being victorious and slaying the Syrians. It is strange that they are likened to two little flocks of goats, with one flock numbering 7,000 and the flock of princes numbering 232, which is a figure close to 300. While there will be three World Wars, in this first confrontation Ben-hadad demanded of Israel wealth, wives, etc.—an increasingly unreasonable and exorbitant demand—until Ahab fought and won. Then a second confrontation took place between Ahab and Ben-hadad, as we will see, and World War III is shown in the Micaiah picture in 1 Kings 22:1-38.

The “army” that followed the 232 princes comprised the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). The Pastor thought the Church would be complete at the time of World War I. First, he thought the end date was 1914, and then he changed it to 1918. However, he lived only until 1916.

We will continue the narrative and then consider World Wars I and II together.

1 Kings 20:22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.

1 Kings 20:23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.

1 Kings 20:24 And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms:

1 Kings 20:25 And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.

1 Kings 20:26 And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.

1 Kings 20:27 And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

1 Kings 20:28 And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

1 Kings 20:29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.

1 Kings 20:30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

What does the term “two little flocks of kids” in verse 27 imply? Certainly the captains of Israel were small in number.

Ben-hadad’s advisers said that the reason Syria had lost the first war was because the Lord was the God of the hills. Therefore, the strategy the second time was to plan that the confrontation would take place in the valleys.

Notice that Jezebel is not in this picture. Hence this battle was a political, or civil, confrontation. World War I, which started in 1914, was basically three nations against three nations. On one side were England, France, and Russia, but Russia had to back out when the Russian Revolution against the Czar occurred in 1916-1917. Germany, Italy, and Japan were on the other side, and the war seemed to favor Germany when Russia withdrew. From the Allied standpoint on the Continent, Germany was the real enemy, the nation most feared. However, Germany was defeated.

In World War II, again Germany was the big enemy, and that nation was defeated the second

time. Currently Germany is in NATO, and the potential rival in the opposite camp is Russia, if we understand prophecy correctly based on other pictures. Europe is basically the setting, the battleground, in all three World Wars.

We will make a few comments on the method of warfare in World Wars I and II. World War I was trench warfare; it was more or less a hand-to-hand battle, which is the same method that had been used for centuries. With the development of airplanes just starting, planes were not a significant factor. Thus the forces were land armies.

However, in World War II, Germany used the Panzer militia, or tanks. Without declaring war, Germany invaded and took control of Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc., in just a matter of days. Because of mechanized tank warfare, Germany seemed to be prospering on flat terrain, that is, on the “plains.” (In contradistinction, trench warfare can take place anywhere.)

But in the final analysis, both World War I and World War II were won by the Allied powers. In the first instance, the entry of the United States made the victory possible by sending great numbers of troops. In the Second World War, a similar situation occurred. The very tanks that Hitler started with were counteracted when England and the United States made their own tanks. Eventually the German tanks were overwhelmed because of the mass production of tanks, especially here in America.

Not all the particulars here in chapter 20 would fit the antitype. Two small groupings of Israelites are mentioned the second time (verses 15 and 20), so in both battles, Israel fought with insignificant numbers against a great Syrian host.

Q: Is there any connection with the fact that by the time World War III comes, the Little Flock will be off the scene? Since God knows who will comprise the Little Flock and also the Great Company, both are mentioned for World War I and World War II. Revelation 7:3 reads, “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” When the final conflict comes, the Little Flock will be off the scene but not the Great Company.

A: At this time, we cannot harmonize all the details in chapter 20 with the antitype. [Note: The study on this chapter was given in 1990.]

1 Kings 20:31 And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.

1 Kings 20:32 So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? he is my brother.

1 Kings 20:33 Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

1 Kings 20:34 And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

This whole setting pertained to the military, not to religion. Also, we see that Ahab spared the

life of Ben-hadad at the end of this second war and made a covenant with him.

Comment: If Ben-hadad represents Germany as a common denominator, we are seeing again today a leniency toward that country in allowing reunification.

Reply: The Allied nations were liberal to Germany after World War II. Of all the strange developments, the Marshall Plan was instituted, and the United States backed up the finance minister of Germany, who was a genius. He brought Germany through circumstances from the bottom of the ladder to the top. Japan rose economically too. Thus these two nations emerged from their defeat to assume a strong economic status. In the type, King Ahab pulled Ben-hadad up into his chariot and made a covenant with him. Antotypically speaking, this certainly happened as a result of World War II.

Japan was an enemy during the war, but the Japanese people revered General Douglas MacArthur for his efforts after the war. Japan was in chaos and disarray following the bombing of two cities, but MacArthur treated the Japanese very honorably, raising their morale. A good administrator, he got Japan back on its feet. Japan's and Germany's reconstruction continued, and now they are in a better financial situation than we are.

Many things are backward and strange in the social, criminal, and moral system. The enemy, not the victor, dictated the terms for peace. For example, Israel won the more recent war with Egypt but, because of pressure from allies, lost the fruits of the war to its Egyptian attackers.

1 Kings 20:35 And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him.

1 Kings 20:36 Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him.

1 Kings 20:37 Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him.

1 Kings 20:38 So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.

1 Kings 20:39 And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.

1 Kings 20:40 And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.

1 Kings 20:41 And he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets.

1 Kings 20:42 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.

1 Kings 20:43 And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

A son of the prophets asked in the name of the Lord that he be smitten. The one who disobeyed “the voice of the LORD” by refusing to do the smiting was slain by a lion. Then that prophet found another man and said, “Smite me.” This time the man smote him but only wounded him instead of killing him. Next the same prophet departed and, disguising himself, waited for King Ahab to come along. As Ahab passed by, the prophet cried out, “I went out into the midst of the battle, and behold, a soldier brought a man to me and said, ‘Keep this man. If by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you will pay a talent of silver.’ And as your servant was busy here and there, the man was gone.” Ahab said to the disguised prophet, “So shall your judgment be. You yourself have decided it.” When the prophet removed the disguise, Ahab recognized him as one of the prophets. The prophet then pronounced judgment on Ahab for letting go the man (Ben-hadad) whom God had devoted to destruction. Ahab went back to Samaria “resentful and sullen” (see RSV). Subsequently Ahab mourned and repented, so the destruction of his house was delayed until his son came on the scene (see chapter 21).

Comment: World War III is not mentioned until the Micaiah account in chapter 22. The prophecy is just given that Ahab would lose his life.

1 Kings 21:1 And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

1 Kings 21:2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

1 Kings 21:3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

1 Kings 21:4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

Ahab pouted like a child because Naboth refused to give him the vineyard.

Comment: Again Ahab was “heavy and displeased” or “vexed and sullen,” as stated in the RSV, but this time his reaction was for selfish reasons (compare 1 Kings 20:43).

Here we have a completely different situation, a separate episode, with Ahab (representing civil power), Jezebel (picturing Catholicism), Naboth’s vineyard, and eventually the appearance of Elijah, who prophesied after Naboth’s death.

What does Naboth’s vineyard represent? We are inclined to think it was the Lord’s vineyard before Constantine’s day because Naboth was betrayed and Jezebel was involved in the acquisition of his vineyard and death (verse 15). Naboth himself represents the Lord’s true people, who had custody of the vineyard. We are reminded of the vineyard in Song 1:6.

Naboth was betrayed and slain as an individual. The Elijah picture commences in AD 539, the beginning of the 1,260 years, whereas the Naboth class existed earlier. Constantine called together various religious groups and took advice from pagan priests. The result was that Arius and his followers were considered heretics and lost their role as representatives of the Christian religion. Those who professed to be Christians after Constantine’s day were really

the nominal Church, and true Christians became a distinct minority as time went on. They were persecuted and during the Dark Ages had to flee for their lives. In the beginning at our Lord's First Advent, Christians were bona fide, and they more or less hewed to the line in the first (or Ephesus) stage of the Church. But little by little, the nominal (or man of sin) element developed in the Church and took over. In the eyes of the nations, those who were considered Christians held positions of prestige; they were recognized by the emperors and had large cathedrals. During that same period, true Christians had to flee, and they met in homes as little nobodies.

The Church started out as a woman clothed with the sun, but then a man-child was born who grew up to be the man of sin and was representative of the nominal Church. Thus the Lord's vineyard was taken over, and the wheat field became a tare field. Stated another way, the vineyard went from Naboth to Ahab. Jezebel was very influential in causing this change.

Q: Certain elements of the Naboth type seem to be common with the experience of the feet members at the end of the age—the feast, the false witnesses, the accusation of blaspheming and traitor, and Naboth's being put to death. Could Naboth also have an end-of-age fulfillment? When the feet members are put to death, Jezebel will think she has taken over the vineyard.

A: Although the beast, dragon, and false prophet will be involved at the end of the age, we still believe Naboth is a picture of the earlier Church. We think a review is being given of the entire Gospel Age leading up to the time of the end because Papacy has already taken over the vineyard. What do we have today that would interest the nominal Church other than our being off the scene and not being a thorn in the flesh? The death of the antitypical Jezebel and Ahab will take place at the end of the age, but we think the sequence here is a different picture.

Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth, and Constantine coveted the Christian religion, for he thought it would be a unifying power to his empire. Thus Constantine adopted Christianity as the official religion of the empire. He got the vineyard, as it were.

1 Kings 21:5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

1 Kings 21:6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

1 Kings 21:7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

1 Kings 21:8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

1 Kings 21:9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

1 Kings 21:10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

1 Kings 21:11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters

which she had sent unto them.

1 Kings 21:12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

1 Kings 21:13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

1 Kings 21:14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

1 Kings 21:15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

1 Kings 21:16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

1 Kings 21:17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

1 Kings 21:18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

1 Kings 21:19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

1 Kings 21:20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

1 Kings 21:21 Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,

1 Kings 21:22 And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.

1 Kings 21:23 And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.

1 Kings 21:24 Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

1 Kings 21:25 But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

1 Kings 21:26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

1 Kings 21:27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

1 Kings 21:28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

1 Kings 21:29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

Elijah was to give a message to Ahab, condemning the seizing of Naboth's vineyard and telling the king his destiny. "Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." In regard to his posterity, it was prophesied, "Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat." And of Jezebel, it was said, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." From a historical standpoint, these prophecies led up to a future judgment to show the guilt of Ahab and Jezebel personally and a pending judgment upon what they represent. When Jezebel was slain by Jehu, he said, "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" (2 Kings 9:36,37). The destiny of Jezebel, as pronounced by Elijah earlier, was then fulfilled.

The point is that chapter 21 gives a history of the relationship of church and state as it existed from Constantine on, leading up to present circumstances, which will be covered by Micaiah the prophet in chapter 22. The Micaiah prophecy tells of a future coming battle, namely, World War III. Chapter 21 is not as difficult to understand as the preceding chapter. If chapter 20 is meant to be understood as a type, we trust the Lord will provide the understanding in due time. Thus chapter 21 reviews the guilt that has been building up and the responsibility of Ahab and Jezebel. Indeed the civil and religious powers have been wanting down through the Gospel Age.

Q: What is the time setting for verse 29? When did Ahab humble himself?

A: Ahab represents the civil powers. In the Holy Roman Empire, both the dragon and the beast ruled with a high hand. That arrangement ceased, but it will briefly reoccur, for Europe wants to be united as in its former days of glory. Today the persecutions of the past are forgotten, but there was a period of time after the French Revolution when many nations were aghast at what had been done in the name of God and country with man's inhumanity to man. And so a desire for democracy has been fostered in Europe and westward. Thus, although there was a time when the civil powers were ashamed of what had happened, they have now chosen to be mum about the subject and do not want a review of history. As a result, the populace as a whole is quite ignorant of what took place in the past.

The dragon (civil power) will not die until the end of the Gospel Age. The dragon pursued the woman (the true Church) into the wilderness, but since it was not successful in eliminating her entirely, it made preparations to attack "the remnant of her seed" (Rev. 12:14-17). The dragon cast water out of its mouth with the intention of overwhelming and drowning her, but instead the earth drank up the water. The dragon was frustrated, and the woman survived. There was shame back there over what had been done, for the dreadful type of persecution was exposed. No wonder people do not want to hear about the persecution and the history of the misdeeds, especially those of the Roman Catholic Church! Similarly, Germany would like to hide what its people did to the Jews in the Holocaust.

Q: Does Elijah represent the feet members in exposing Papacy's sins?

A: That could be. The feet members will pick up what others have said to a certain extent. Many Christians in past ages—the Elijah class—foresaw the doom of mystic Babylon and the powers that be, as well as their replacement with Messiah’s Kingdom. Should we get in a position of convenience and providence, we would do what Micaiah did; that is, we would have to speak out against the church-state union and say it is doomed. We will not want to join or have anything to do with the ecumenical movement because God’s Word condemns it. Thus the voice of the Elijah class has not been stilled but carries on, and as we get nearer the end of the age, some other things are beginning to be seen much more distinctly.

Q: We have tried to keep the Elijah type sequential, and the last date thus far is 1914-1918, when he was given a preview of coming events while in the cave. In 2 Kings 2, the account again picks up Elijah at the 1918 date at Gilgal. Therefore, wouldn’t Elijah here in 1 Kings 21 have to fit the 1914-1918 time slot too, lest this portion get out of sequence? If so, this would be a message in Pastor Russell’s day rather than in our day at the end of the Harvest.

A: We are still inclined to think, as expressed earlier, that Naboth represents Christians who suffered and died much earlier in the Gospel Age. The bloodguilt that was acquired by the civil and religious powers of the past yet needs to be requited.

Some Bible students of the past, under very hard circumstances and without having access to libraries, had a good understanding regarding the destiny of the nations and Papacy. Of course that knowledge is clearer today, for the light gets brighter and brighter. Generally speaking, the Elijah class has existed throughout the Gospel Age and has understood about Papacy for some time, for “Elias truly shall first come” (Matt. 17:11). Events at the end of Elijah’s life represent the feet members. The account in this twenty-first chapter is just an insertion: “And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it,” etc.

1 Kings 22:1 And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.

1 Kings 22:2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.

Two wars with Syria had already taken place, and Israel was twice victorious. The antitypes of the two wars are World War I and World War II. Syria was the traditional enemy of Israel, that is, of the northern kingdom as well as the southern kingdom. Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, “came down” to the king of Israel. The expression “came down” is unusual because the ten-tribe kingdom was north of Judah, the two-tribe kingdom. However, Jerusalem is quite high in elevation—perhaps 2,300 feet above sea level—and a person traveling to northern Israel went north on the backbone of a spine. Then, to get into the Valley of Jezreel, he had to descend onto the plain. The words were probably written from that standpoint—Jehoshaphat went north and then had to descend from the mountain to meet the king on a much lower level.

1 Kings 22:3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

King Ahab of the northern kingdom said to his servants, “Ramoth in Gilead is ours, but we are not taking it from the king of Syria.” Located in northern Transjordan, Ramoth-gilead was on the east side of the Jordan River. Ramoth was the capital of Gilead, a large, fertile area.

1 Kings 22:4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people,

my horses as thy horses.

Ahab asked Jehoshaphat, the king of the two tribes, the southern kingdom, “Will you fight with me to recover Ramoth-gilead?” Jehoshaphat replied, “Yes. I, my people, and my horses are yours.” Thus the king of Judah agreed to join forces with the northern kingdom to fight a common enemy.

Why did Ahab feel that this territory belonged to Israel? At the end of the 40 years in the wilderness, when Moses brought the Israelites to Gilead before entering Israel proper, some of the people wanted to stay on that east side of the Jordan River (Numbers 32). Accordingly, an agreement was made with Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh that the men of those tribes would go and fight to subdue and conquer the Promised Land, but their families (the women and children) would remain behind in Gilead. The inheritance of the 2 1/2 tribes was across the Jordan River in Gilead in a large segment of what is called Jordan today. Thus, from a historical standpoint, Ahab felt that this land in Gilead had been deeded to Israel by God.

The problem was that now much of this territory was occupied by an alien power, the king of Syria. King Ahab felt that if the northern and southern kingdoms joined forces, the cooperative effort would ensure the recapturing of Ramoth-gilead.

In many pictures, the northern kingdom represents Catholicism because it consisted of *ten* tribes, whereas the southern kingdom represents Protestantism because it had only *two* tribes. But in this account, Jezebel, a woman, was not involved, so the participants were just two kings and their forces fighting against the king of Syria. In the past, we suggested that Catholicism is involved in the antitype because that religion boasts of numbers and considers itself a universal church with millions of communicants. However, from a natural standpoint, the ten tribes of Israel represent Europe. Just as Papacy was involved with the Holy Roman Empire, which was basically Europe, so here the more populous ten-tribe northern kingdom represents Europe, which consists of *Catholic*-dominated countries. The two-tribe southern kingdom represents the United States and England, which are *Protestant*-dominated countries. In other words, America and England will join forces with Europe in connection with World War III.

Comment: Jehoshaphat said, “My horses [are] as thy horses,” and horses are a symbol of doctrines.

Reply: Yes, an ecumenical spirit is indicated here, and Syria represents the power occupying this other area styled Ramoth-gilead.

This battle for Ramoth-gilead with Israel and Judah fighting Syria, the common enemy, is representative of the end of the Gospel Age, and the battle will be repeated in the next generation (2 Kings 9:1–10:30). At one time, the Holy Roman Empire occupied a much larger area than the Europe we have been accustomed to in recent years. Then, in the last year or so, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, etc., defected because they were tired of the yoke of communism, but this secession was brought about without warfare. These countries, which historically were Catholic, are now throwing in their lot with the Western powers and trying to make an economic union. What we are seeing today is not the picture shown here in 1 Kings 22 because *war* was involved in the type. Therefore, although these countries have joined forces, other European nations are not yet in this financial arrangement. For example, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania want their independence from Russia. They, too, are traditionally Catholic or Russian Orthodox. Hence some powers considered to be part of Christendom in the past are still under communist domination. [Note: This Bible study took place in 1990.]

The point is that in spite of current events, conditions can again change radically. What we see

today is not indicative of the future. A backlash within these governments could make seemingly friendly countries very hostile. Whereas formerly Communist countries now look to America and would like to share the benefits and fruits of economic prosperity, some of them are finding they cannot easily switch to democracy. Their whole system, their economic infrastructure, is geared to a different type of thinking, so there is a disenchantment with some of the populace. As time goes on and conditions worsen and the hoped-for economic prosperity does not come, the people may reason, "We were better off under communism." At any rate, the time will come when there is a union of the so-called Christian countries.

1 Kings 22:5 And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, **Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD today.**

1 Kings 22:6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, **Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.**

1 Kings 22:7 And Jehoshaphat said, **Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?**

Jehoshaphat wanted to have a religious backing for this proposed battle to recover Ramoth-gilead. Therefore, he wanted to inquire of the Lord to get this blessing. Those who prophesied were the 400 prophets of Jezebel, who were not slain when, following the contest, Elijah put to death the 450 prophets of Baal. Of course the 400 prophets were biased in favor of the northern kingdom of Israel. With unanimity, they declared, "Go and fight, for you will win this battle. You will have the Lord's backing." Realizing the bias, Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not an additional prophet of Jehovah in the northern kingdom of whom we might inquire?" The 400 prophets were not enough.

1 Kings 22:8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, **There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.**

Ahab replied, "There is yet one man in the northern kingdom, Micaiah the prophet, but I do not like him because he prophesies evil about me." (Based on prior prophecies, Micaiah's testimonies were not in the best interests of the king of Israel.) Jehoshaphat then said, "Let not the king say so." At Jehoshaphat's request, Ahab summoned Micaiah.

This situation was unique—with 400 prophets all testifying the *same* way, the voice of just *one more* prophet would be considered. Obviously, the setting was providential. The implication is that Micaiah represents the Lord's people, who, at the end of the age, will somehow be representatively asked their opinion about the coming battle.

Comment: Because of the unstable, urgent conditions at that time, the so-called Christian governments will consult with occult sources.

Reply: Yes, Jezebel's 400 prophets were of this spirit, and the Scriptures indicate that the civil powers will inquire of wizards, astrologers, etc. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God?" (Isa. 8:19). In wanting to get as much support as possible for entering the confrontation, the governments will resort to occult methods.

1 Kings 22:9 Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, **Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.**

1 Kings 22:10 And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.

The king of Israel humored Jehoshaphat by agreeing to summon Micaiah. While an officer went to find Micaiah, the two kings dressed in their regal robes and went and sat on separate thrones “in a void place” at the entrance of the gate of Samaria. While they awaited the arrival of Micaiah, the 400 prophesied before them.

It is significant that the “void place” is a “threshing floor” in the RSV and KJV margin. The thrones being set on a threshing floor suggests the threshing of *wheat* and the *latter part* of the harvest, that is, the very end of the age. After the wheat is threshed, the tares will be burned (Matt. 13:40; Rev. 14:14-19).

1 Kings 22:11 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.

1 Kings 22:12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king’s hand.

There was a consensus of the 400 prophets earlier, but now, as the kings of Israel and Judah sat at the entrance to the gate of Samaria, either all of the prophets or just the more prominent ones wanted to show not only that they agreed but also that they were being moved by the spirit, or influence, of a miraculous power. Of course it was an unholy spirit, and evidently, they were in a frenzy.

Of the 400 prophets, one named Zedekiah made horns of iron to demonstrate dramatically and forcibly that the war would be a success. His words were, “Thus saith the LORD, With these [horns] shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.” The two horns represented the two kings, the two powers.

All 400 prophets agreed that Ramoth-gilead would fall from Syrian control into the hands of Israel and Judah. In chorus fashion, they chanted, “Go up to battle at Ramoth-gilead and prosper, for God will give you the victory.” The 400 prophesied a *false* message in the name of Jehovah, for their direction was actually coming from Satan.

1 Kings 22:13 And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.

1 Kings 22:14 And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

The messenger went to summon Micaiah, but before the prophet returned and had an audience with the kings and gave his advice, the messenger tried to persuade him to agree with the 400 prophets. The messenger said in effect, “All the others agree, and it is in *your* best interest to do the same and to speak that which is good.” The implication is that the feet members will be pressured to slant their testimony to agree with the church-state confederacy. But what does the Lord’s Word instruct? “Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Isa. 8:12,13). Micaiah faithfully replied, “What the LORD said unto me, that will I speak.” But his actual answer to the

king of Israel was startling, as we shall see.

1 Kings 22:15 So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

1 Kings 22:16 And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?

The king of Israel asked Micaiah, “Should we go to battle to take Ramoth-gilead?” He got right to the point and did not use any flowery language. “Yes or no—what is your answer?” was his attitude. Micaiah responded, “Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver Ramoth-gilead into the hand of the king.” The prophet’s literal words seem to indicate that he agreed with the 400 false prophets, but the king’s reaction shows otherwise: “How many times shall I adjure you to tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?” Ahab understood by the way Micaiah spoke that he did not mean what he was saying. Despite the words, Micaiah could have indicated his real advice in a number of ways. For example, he could have parroted, or mimicked, the testimony of the other prophets. Also, hand gestures and facial expressions could have added to the effectiveness of his reply. The point is that he used **SARCASM** to indicate that the planned attack on Ramoth-gilead forebode defeat. The king’s reply suggests that Micaiah had used this technique in the past, that it was characteristic of him. Clearly, the king of Israel got the message—Micaiah’s reply was “no” in a “yes” form; it was sarcasm.

1 Kings 22:17 And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.

1 Kings 22:18 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

Immediately Micaiah reported a vision or a dream: “I saw all Israel [the northern kingdom] scattered upon the hills, as sheep that do not have a shepherd.” Right away we can see the drift of the vision, for the king of Israel was the “shepherd,” and the “sheep” were his army. It is significant that the prophet singled out Israel, not Judah.

Micaiah continued, “And the LORD said, These [the sheep] have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.” In other words, there would be a defeat.

The king of Israel then said to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, “Didn’t I tell you that Micaiah would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?” Ahab realized that the prophecy forebode ill for him.

1 Kings 22:19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

1 Kings 22:20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

1 Kings 22:21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

1 Kings 22:22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I

will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

1 Kings 22:23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

Verses 19-23 begin to tie this vision in with Revelation 16:13,14 about the three unclean froglike lying spirits of demons that will come out of the mouth of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet to gather the nations to the battle of Armageddon. Thus the Micaiah picture pertains to the end of the age.

Micaiah used a *hypothetical* situation to foretell truth. (Similarly, Jesus used parables to teach true lessons.) Here God was in heaven seated on His throne with the host of heaven standing on both sides. He asked, “How can Ahab be persuaded to go to the battle at Ramoth-gilead and be defeated?” Of course God would not literally ask such a question, but hypothetical techniques were used on many occasions in the Old Testament, such as the allegory in the beginning of the Book of Job (Job 1:6-12). Here the technique was a form of sarcasm to show that Ahab and Jehoshaphat would not listen to the true advice. After several suggestions, a “spirit” came forth and said he would be “a lying spirit” in the mouth of all 400 false prophets; that is, he would influence their words. God said, “Go ahead, for you will be successful.” Micaiah ended the prophetic vision bluntly and boldly: “The LORD has spoken evil concerning you, Ahab.”

1 Kings 22:24 But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, dramatically smote Micaiah on the cheek. In assuming the leadership of the 400 false prophets on this occasion, he spoke boldly: “Which way went the spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto you?” The 400 were all supposed to be true prophets of God, and here was this upstart, Micaiah, who prophesied the opposite result: defeat. This same Zedekiah had made two horns of iron earlier (verse 11).

Q: What or whom does Zedekiah represent in the antitype?

A: A spokesman for Christendom will take the lead in opposing the feet members. In effect, Micaiah had said that the 400 prophets were all liars. Zedekiah could even be the pope, but his actual identity remains to be seen. The scenes that will take place at the end of the age will be in different countries—the United States, Canada, the nations of Europe, etc.—and the Lord’s people are in all these places. Therefore, the representative will be somebody with respect to the locale that is involved. If the setting of the Micaiah picture is in Europe, the mouthpiece for the 400 prophets will also be there, and of course the pope, being in Italy, is in Europe. No doubt there will be another spokesman in this country. The point is that in Catholic countries, the beast will have the most to say; in Protestant countries, the false prophet will be the most vociferous; and in non-Christian countries such as those in Africa, the dragon will speak. In some countries, two or three of these elements will act together. Indeed the effect of the unclean doctrines that emanate from these three symbols will be worldwide in drawing the people, or nations, to the battle of Armageddon.

Another point to be noted is that by boldly hitting Micaiah on the cheek, Zedekiah broke the spell and, in effect, shut off the prophet’s influence. Then Zedekiah said, “Which way did the spirit of the LORD leave me to speak through *your* mouth?” In other words, he was saying, “God speaks through *my* mouth, not yours.” This psychological interference stilled Micaiah’s influence, and Ahab and even Jehoshaphat disregarded his testimony and went to battle

against the king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead. On the whole, Jehoshaphat was considered a good king, but he was inveigled into this battle, maybe more from a political standpoint. Also, there was intermarriage between one of Jehoshaphat's children and a son or daughter of Ahab, so a certain degree of rapport existed between them.

1 Kings 22:25 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

1 Kings 22:26 And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;

1 Kings 22:27 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.

1 Kings 22:28 And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.

1 Kings 22:29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead.

Micaiah predicted defeat and said the day would come when Zedekiah would go into an inner chamber to hide himself. Ahab then ordered Micaiah to be imprisoned and fed with the bread and water "of affliction" until he returned victorious. We are reminded of John the Baptist's bold testimony, which led to his imprisonment. However, he did not remain very long in prison, before he was beheaded at the machinations of Herodias after her daughter Salome's dancing before Herod. The Micaiah picture does not conflict with the type of John the Baptist. The account simply says that Micaiah went to prison, and we hear no more about him after he said to Ahab, "If you return in peace, God has not spoken by me." In other words, if Ahab returned victoriously from the battle, Micaiah was a false prophet. Then Micaiah swiftly introduced an exhortation to the people: "*Hearken, O people, every one of you.*" He wanted the two kings to note what he had just said in *warning* the people.

"So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead." Ahab and Jehoshaphat ignored Micaiah's advice and went to battle at Ramoth-gilead.

1 Kings 22:30 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.

1 Kings 22:31 But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.

1 Kings 22:32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.

1 Kings 22:33 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.

Ahab disguised himself before entering the battle, but he told Jehoshaphat to wear his kingly raiment. We are reminded of the John the Baptist picture, in which Queen Herodias (Catholicism) put her daughter Salome (Protestantism) in the forefront (Matt. 14:3-11; Mark 6:17-28). When Salome danced and impressed King Herod (civil power), he rashly promised

her, in front of his lords, whatever she wanted. Herodias stayed in the background and advised the daughter to ask immediately for the head (the life) of John the Baptist (the feet members) on a platter. To the observers, the daughter appeared to be wholly responsible for the request. In the antitype, Salome will be one of the Protestant daughters of the Catholic mother. And there are other pictures, so depending on which part of the world one of the feet members lives in, a particular type might or might not pertain to that area. Generally speaking, people tend to think only from their own standpoint.

Since Micaiah had prophesied that the king of Israel would die, Ahab might have thought his disguise would enable him to survive; that is, he was trying to play it safe. Meanwhile, the king of Syria instructed his 32 captains to kill only the king of Israel. Therefore, when they saw Jehoshaphat in his regal robes and using a fancy chariot, they seized him, assuming he was King Ahab. When Jehoshaphat revealed his identity, the Syrians let him go.

1 Kings 22:34 And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.

1 Kings 22:35 And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.

1 Kings 22:36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

Micaiah's prediction came true. Ahab died, and the predicted proclamation went out, "Let every man return to his own house, city, and country in peace" (see 1 Kings 22:17). When Ahab was slain by "a certain man [who] drew a bow at a venture," a pool of blood collected in the chariot.

Comment: For "at a venture," the NIV has "at random."

End-of-the-Age Antitype

Micaiah, who represents the Little Flock, was put in prison. A "certain man" shot an arrow of truth that smote Ahab, the king of Israel, and resulted in his eventual death. The suggestion is that an individual (or a class represented by the individual) will somehow broadcast a message that is very damaging to papal Europe.

The account in 2 Kings 9:1–10:28 regarding Jehu, who was at the battle in Ramoth-gilead, is a more complete picture. He was responsible for the death of Jezebel, and it might be said that he is the individual who shot the arrow. Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to tell Jehu that the God of Israel had determined he would be the successor of King Jehoram of Israel. In other words, the messenger precipitated the circumstances, and Jehu mortally wounded Jehoram. Thus there is a similarity in that both kings of Israel were slain: Ahab and Jehoram.

However, there are also a few significant differences in the accounts of Micaiah and Jehu. One difference is that in 1 Kings 22, Jehoshaphat returned from the battle at Ramoth-gilead, but the king of Israel died. The suggestion seems to be that Papacy will fall first. Since the beast represents Europe, the image of the beast would be the United States and possibly England. Hence the fall of the Protestant portion of Christendom will occur slightly later.

Jehoshaphat, who represents Protestantism, was a good king overall, as was his father Asa, but

peculiarly, from the time that Jehoshaphat returned to Judah, he seemed to go astray. Earlier he had removed the sodomites from the land and destroyed many images to false gods, but toward the end of his life, he turned back from closely hewing to the Lord.

Europe is basically Catholic. Generally speaking, the countries of Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, etc., are Catholic-oriented. Israel, the more populous ten-tribe kingdom, is a representation of Europe.

1 Kings 22:37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.

Ahab died in the battle and was brought back to the homeland, to Samaria, the capital of northern Israel. He was buried in that area.

1 Kings 22:38 And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.

Comment: Dogs licked up Ahab's blood, as prophesied in 1 Kings 21:19. "And thou shalt speak unto him [Ahab], saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?... In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."

Reply: This prophecy was given because of Ahab's treatment of Naboth. Dogs licked up Ahab's blood in Jezreel, the very place where Naboth had been slain and near where Jezebel would later be slain. Dogs also licked up Jezebel's blood. Thus all three died in Jezreel: innocent Naboth and guilty Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah also prophesied the death of Ahab's posterity: "Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat" (1 Kings 21:24).

1 Kings 22:39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Ahab had a house that was garnished on the exterior with very expensive ivory. In addition, he built many cities.

1 Kings 22:40 So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Ahab died, and his son Ahaziah reigned. There were two Ahaziahs and two Jehorams with some overlapping of their reigns.

1 Kings 22:41 And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

1 Kings 22:42 Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

After King Asa died, his son Jehoshaphat began to reign in Judah at age 35. He reigned for 25 years, or until he was 60 years old.

1 Kings 22:43 And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.

1 Kings 22:44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

Jehoshaphat “walked in all the [good] ways of Asa his father.” However, Jehoshaphat did not take away all the high places, and it was not right that he “made peace” with King Ahab. What started the peace was the intermarriage of their children, which caused the duplication of some names.

1 Kings 22:45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

In other words, the Book of Chronicles is written in the records of the kings of Judah, and the Book of Kings is written in the records of the kings of Israel. In many places, the writings are word for word, being a reiteration of what is recorded in the other book, although there are differences. Thus some events are recorded in both books.

1 Kings 22:46 And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

Jehoshaphat removed the rest of the sodomites from the land. Asa had tried to accomplish this cleansing but could not rid the land of all of them.

1 Kings 22:47 There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king.

A deputy was the king in Edom.

1 Kings 22:48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.

2 Chronicles 20:35-37 reads, “And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly: And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Ezion-geber. Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.” Because Jehoshaphat cooperated with the wicked King Ahaziah of Israel to make ships, God allowed the ships to be “broken” (shipwrecked) at Ezion-geber. Divine Providence intervened because fraternization was a bad influence. The history of Israel during those days was quite corrupt, while Judah hewed to the line of righteousness, relatively speaking. The working agreement was an example of evil communications corrupting good conduct. Thus the joint venture was frustrated when the ships were destroyed.

1 Kings 22:49 Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.

Jehoshaphat realized the shipwrecked vessels were a lesson from the Lord. Hence he refused further cooperation with King Ahaziah.

1 Kings 22:50 And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

Jehoshaphat died, and his son Jehoram reigned in Judah.

1 Kings 22:51 Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth

year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel.

1 Kings 22:52 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin:

1 Kings 22:53 For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

Ahaziah had a short reign of only two years, and he did evil and served Baal like his father Ahab, his mother Jezebel, and Jeroboam, who not only caused the division of the nation of Israel into two kingdoms after Solomon's death but also was the first king of the ten tribes.

THE BOOK OF 2 KINGS

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1990-1991)

2 Kings 1:1 Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

Moab rebelled against Israel after Ahab died, probably feeling that Ahaziah was weaker in character, rulership, and organizational ability.

2 Kings 1:2 And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.

As the result of a fall, Ahaziah was sick, so he sent messengers to find out if he would recover. However, instead of inquiring of God, he sent the messengers to Baal-zebub (Beelzebub), the lord of the flies or hornets, a god of Ekron, that is, a Philistine god (Matt. 10:25).

Q: Was Beelzebub derived from the Philistines?

A: Yes. Also, this worship spread northward into Phoenicia, which is Lebanon today.

Comment: Beelzebub must have been a powerful god for the scribes and Pharisees to accuse Jesus of using this power at his First Advent (Luke 11:14-20).

Reply: Yes, they meant that Jesus accomplished his miracles by Satanic power because of his close relationship with the Devil. They were forced to admit that the cures were miraculous, so they ascribed them to an evil source. The world back there recognized the power of evil.

Ahaziah was the son of Ahab. What an insult to Jehovah for the king of the ten tribes to inquire about his future from a foreign god of a different religion! Similarly, King Saul sought information from the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28:7-19).

2 Kings 1:3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?

2 Kings 1:4 Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.

Elijah was told to intercept the messengers of Ahaziah and ask, "Are you going to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, because there is no God in Israel?" The message from God was that Ahaziah would die for his disobedience.

2 Kings 1:5 And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?

After Elijah delivered the message, the messengers returned to Ahaziah, who asked the reason for their speedy return.

2 Kings 1:6 And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of

Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

The messengers repeated to Ahaziah the message that “a man” had given them.

2 Kings 1:7 And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?

2 Kings 1:8 And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.

When Ahaziah asked for a description of this “man,” he knew immediately that he was Elijah. With the nature of the message being so strong, the king did not need much of a description.

Elijah was “an hairy man” in that he was clothed in a hairy garment. Moreover, he wore “a girdle of leather about his loins.” In other words, “hairy” did not refer to his body but to the practical untreated animal skins that comprised his raiment and gave him an unkempt appearance. This description of Elijah is helpful.

Comment: Matthew 3:4 tells that John the Baptist wore “raiment of camel’s hair.” This incident in 2 Kings shows why some who saw John thought that perhaps Elijah had been resurrected (John 1:19-23).

Reply: Yes, and God had said, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Mal. 4:5).

2 Kings 1:9 Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.

2 Kings 1:10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

2 Kings 1:11 Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.

2 Kings 1:12 And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

Twice a captain with 50 men was sent by Ahaziah to apprehend Elijah. And twice Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume the 50 and their captain. The first captain said to Elijah, “Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.” Elijah replied, “If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.” The second captain spoke similarly, and Elijah replied the same way. Why did both captains call Elijah a “man of God”? In each case, the words were probably spoken with a disparaging, sarcastic, and/or mimicking inflection; that is, the tone was not respectful. Why did Elijah say, “If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven”? He was proving his authority from Almighty God.

Comment: Ahaziah would have known the history of his father Ahab’s dealings with Elijah, so for him to react this way and try to apprehend the prophet shows a tendency toward incorrigibility.

Reply: Yes, the contest with the 450 false prophets followed by their slaying was known. Ahaziah's desire to apprehend Elijah shows not only that he had a mean streak but also that he had a character similar to that of the first two captains. Elijah had already predicted that Ahaziah would not be cured of his illness and would die, yet he intended to apprehend and reprove the prophet. Thus Elijah refused to go with the captains.

2 Kings 1:13 And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.

2 Kings 1:14 Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.

2 Kings 1:15 And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

The third captain with his 50 men showed meekness, sincerity, and humility. He used the term "man of God" respectfully and even got down on his knees. In addition to being concerned for his own life, he was concerned for the life of the 50 men underneath his charge, calling them *Elijah's* "servants."

The angel of God said, "Go down with him. Do not be afraid." Here is an insight into Elijah's character. His *waiting* for instruction before going to Ahaziah shows that although the prophet spoke strongly, he did so only when he felt it was the Lord's will. This lesson is good for Christians to remember so that they do not get too strong or brave in their *own* strength. To please the Lord, they need the full assurance of faith that they are doing the right thing. Thus, after being assured by the angel as to what God's will was for him, Elijah obeyed promptly—regardless of any natural inclinations. He arose and went with the captain to King Ahaziah.

Q: Is there an antitype here with another series of three? Israel fought three wars with Syria, and now three different captains, each with a group of 50, went out to Elijah.

A: Possibly the antitype is that there will be an audience of truth. For example, the Lord said Paul was "a chosen vessel" to bear His name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). Somehow in the final act at the end of the age, the Lord's people will be invited to speak. Paul was asked to speak, and that will also be the experience of some of the feet members. The following types verify this thought. King Nebuchadnezzar gave the three Hebrew children a private audience. Jesus had a private audience with Pilate. John the Baptist had an opportunity to rebuke King Herod. Thus, as the Scriptures suggest, being called to the attention of the authorities will be a part of the final witness.

2 Kings 1:16 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

When Elijah got to Ahaziah, he repeated the earlier message he had given to the messengers who were on their way to inquire of the god of Ekron as to the king's fate. The messengers took back the message from God that because Ahaziah was inquiring of Baal-zebub, he would die. That message was secondhand, or indirect; now the same declaration was given in person.

Why did the king summon Elijah? What was his attitude? Ahaziah probably wanted to browbeat Elijah into changing his testimony, but instead the prophet repeated the message forcefully: “Thou shalt not come down off that bed ... but *shalt surely die*.” From God’s words, “Be not afraid of him,” Elijah drew a sufficiency of strength and displayed no fear before Ahaziah.

2 Kings 1:17 So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.

Now two Jehorams were on the throne contemporaneously, one in the northern kingdom and the other in the southern kingdom. Ahaziah had no son, so the Jehoram who reigned over the ten tribes was probably a brother of Ahaziah, that is, another son of Ahab.

2 Kings 1:18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

The book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah and the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel were edited. The original records were tenfold greater than what is recorded in the Bible. We get only the information the Lord deemed needful for His people.

Comment: Right after the Micaiah account, 2 Chronicles 19:1,2 reads, “And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.” Thus God sent a seer to reprimand King Jehoshaphat after he went to battle in Ramoth-gilead in cooperation with King Ahab. The rebuke was, “Should you help the ungodly and love those who hate God? Therefore, God’s wrath is come upon you.”

Reply: Yes, fraternization is wrong, even in business. Incidentally, this Jehu is not the one who was anointed to be the king of Israel.

Chapter 1 ends with Ahaziah’s dying in Samaria. The chapter started with, “Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.” Moab’s rebellion will be treated in 2 Kings 3:5.

2 Kings 2:1 And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

Elijah was given the information in Gilgal that it was God’s purpose for him to be taken up into heaven by a whirlwind, for his earthly career was ending. God would remove him from Elisha’s “head”; that is, Elijah, the one over (or superior to) Elisha, would be removed (verse 3). However, Elijah was not taken away, so he “went with Elisha from Gilgal.” We find subsequently that there were at least four stops, the first stop being Gilgal.

2 Kings 2:2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el.

Elijah advised Elisha to tarry at Gilgal while he went on to Bethel, but Elisha said he would not leave Elijah. Therefore, he accompanied Elijah, and they both went down to Bethel, the second stop.

Elisha’s expression, “As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee,” reminds

us of Ruth's words to her mother-in-law. When Naomi was going to leave Moab and return to Israel after the death of her husband and two sons, she advised the two Moabite women who were married to her sons to go back to their homes. She appreciated their kindness but felt they should stay in their own country where they would be more apt to find new husbands. Ruth replied that she would not leave Naomi and thus accompanied her to Israel.

2 Kings 2:3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

Q: Is it significant that the sons of the prophets are not mentioned until Bethel? They are not in the picture at Gilgal.

A: We do not know.

The sons of the prophets who were in a school at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said, "Don't you know that God will take away Elijah, your master, from off your head today?" How *unusual* that all the sons of the prophets had been informed of the expectation, as well as Elisha, who said, "Yes, I know it." The details are not supplied as to how the expectation was known. What in the antitype indicates that they would be aware of the imminence of the departure of the Elijah class? Current events will become so conspicuous that they will know the time is drawing close for the completion of the Elijah class, the Church, the Little Flock. As Jesus said, "When [you see] these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Q: Jesus said in John 3:13, "No man hath ascended up to heaven," so where was Elijah taken?

A: Elijah was taken up into the sky by a whirlwind. When Hebrews 11 enumerates certain Ancient Worthies who died, Enoch is stated as an exception in verse 5: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him." Since Elijah is not mentioned in that listing, he can also be an exception. The Pastor surmised that Elijah was taken to the same place where Enoch had previously been translated. How interesting that Enoch, a person from the world before the Flood, and Elijah, a person from the present evil world, both received a translation!

Q: Are there several heavens in Scripture?

A: Yes, heaven can be (1) the literal heaven, or atmosphere, about the earth; (2) the symbolic ecclesiastical heaven, the Christian world; (3) the spirit realm; and (4) the heaven above all heavens, or God's residence. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we know that Elijah did not go up to God's heaven.

2 Kings 2:4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

Elijah again told Elisha to tarry: "Wait here in Bethel, for God has sent me to Jericho." Elisha gave the same reply, "As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." Thus they both went on to Jericho, the third stop.

2 Kings 2:5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head today? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

Again the sons of the prophets, but this time the ones at Jericho, said to Elisha, “Don’t you know that God will take away your master from off your head today?” The word “today” means “soon,” “at any moment”—that the event was imminent.

2 Kings 2:6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

When nothing happened, Elijah told Elisha to tarry at Jericho, for God had sent him on to Jordan. Elisha insisted on accompanying Elijah to the next (or fourth) stop.

2 Kings 2:7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

Fifty sons of the prophets went and stood on a hill so that they could see Elijah and Elisha “afar off,” in the distance, standing at the Jordan River. From their vantage point, the sons of the prophets would be able to see Elijah and Elisha cross the Jordan River when the waters parted.

The account does not say whether the 50 sons of the prophets were from Jordan or Jericho. However, it is likely that these 50 were different sons of the prophets. Either way they represent a class that was aware of the expected soon departure of the Church at Bethel and Jericho.

Q: At Bethel and Jericho, the sons of the prophets spoke directly with Elisha, face to face. At Jordan, they viewed events from a distance. Wouldn’t this distinction be significant in the antitype? Perhaps world conditions will be such that the “sons of the prophets” class will not fraternize as closely at that time because of fear? Surely they will not be in close proximity to the smiting.

A: That could be, for the sons of the prophets did not go to the Jordan River. We had not thought of the separation in that light, but it sounds reasonable. By inference, Elisha had to be in hearing distance of the sons of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho in order to parry the question “Don’t you know that Elijah is to be taken today?”

2 Kings 2:8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

At Jordan, Elijah took his mantle, folded it up, and smote the waters of the river with it. The mantle represents the *authority* of the Word of God.

Comment: For “wrapped it together,” the RSV and the NIV have “rolled it up.” The suggestion is that Elijah gave a compact, specific message.

Reply: Yes, the message will be condensed, to the point, and strong.

Q: Could the smiting message be the seventh plague (Rev. 16:17)?

A: It is not the seventh plague per se, but there is the possibility that those doing the smiting have an awareness of the seventh plague. Other pictures will dovetail at that time, coming to a focal point in prophecy at a certain event at the end of the age.

Q: Is there a relationship between the smiting and Moses’ holding up his rod at the Red Sea?

A: Of course Moses did not smite the waters, but his rod, like the mantle, was a symbol of authority. Specifically, Elijah's mantle was a symbol of the authority of God's Word. Its being compact indicates a *strong* message with enough *power* to divide the waters of the river Jordan. God's Word is a message, but being wrapped together makes it a *condensed* message. Stated another way, the mantle, the Word of God, will give the feet members the authority to preach a strong, condensed message.

The dividing of the waters was literal with both Moses and Elijah, but the antitype will be symbolic. The word *Jordan* means "judged down," and the message will affect the "waters," that is, the peoples, as shown in Revelation 17:15, "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where [upon which] the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." A *world* church will be affected, namely, the Catholic Church. Elijah's strong message will become known to the public, and its effect will be to divide public opinion "hither and thither," to the right and to the left. In other words, some will be for the message, and some will be against it. Some will be sympathetic, and some will be unsympathetic. The smiting message will cause a division of public sentiment.

Elijah "smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground." The fact that Elijah and Elisha went over dry-shod suggests the waters parted, as did the Red Sea with Moses.

Q: In crossing the river Jordan, did Elijah and Elisha go over to the east side where the 2 1/2 tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh were?

A: Yes. Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and the stopping place at the Jordan River were on the Israeli (west) side, so Elijah and Elisha would have crossed over to the east.

Q: Is there any significance to the number 50, which keeps coming up? 2 Kings 2:7,16,17 mentions 50 sons of the prophets. 2 Kings 1:9-14 tells that King Ahaziah sent three captains, each with a group of 50, on three different occasions to apprehend Elijah. 1 Kings 18:4,13 says that Obadiah hid two groups of 50 prophets in a cave and fed them bread and water to save their lives.

A: Similarly, when Jesus miraculously fed the multitudes with bread, he had them sit down in companies. Regimenting the 4,000 and the 5,000 in groups of 50 and 100 showed orderliness (Mark 6:35-41). Jehovah is a God of *order*. Apparently, the sons of the prophets lived together in communes, and here the suggestion is that if the number exceeded 50, the community of prophets got too large. Then another school of the prophets was established in another area.

2 Kings 2:9 **And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.**

When Elijah and Elisha arrived on the east side of the Jordan River, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken away from you." Elisha replied, "Let a double [equal] portion of your spirit be upon me." As here, the word "double" sometimes means a similar, or duplicate, portion. For example, if an actor gets sick, his double takes his place, meaning one like the actor, a duplicate. Therefore, Elisha wanted a portion of the Holy Spirit equal to Elijah's; he wanted that same power and privilege.

Comment: It is interesting that Elijah had to prompt Elisha to ask for the similar portion of the Holy Spirit.

2 Kings 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

In response to Elisha's request, Elijah said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, you will receive the similar portion *if* you see me go; otherwise, it shall not be so." In other words, Elisha had to be alert and stay close to Elijah. Up until the last minute, when the chariot and horses of fire parted them, Elijah and Elisha were together, walking side by side in their journey.

Comment: The foolish virgins asked the wise virgins for oil but did not get it until they had gone to the marketplace of hard experience (Matt. 25:1-13).

Reply: That is right. By familiarizing ourselves with the context here in 2 Kings, we begin to see a remarkable similarity with other pictures in the Bible of the last chapter of the Church's experience in the present life.

2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Notice that Elijah and Elisha went on for a little while and *talked*. At the three earlier stops, there was no mention of talking. Now Elisha was communicating and had a close rapport with Elijah.

Suddenly "a chariot [singular] of fire, and horses [plural] of fire ... [appeared and] parted them both asunder." The chariot (a means of conveyance) and the horses came between Elijah and Elisha and separated them, resulting in Elijah's being taken "up by a whirlwind into heaven."

In the antitype, the "chariot" is the coming church-state organization, and the "horses" are "fiery" (troublesome) doctrines. Some debate whether Elijah went up into heaven in a chariot of fire or in a whirlwind. In a sense, the debate would be splitting hairs, but certainly the chariot of fire was instrumental in separating Elijah from Elisha and had the result of Elijah's being taken up in a whirlwind. Whether Elijah went up into heaven with or without the chariot of fire, it would seem that the whirlwind is the correct view. In the antitype, the persecuting experience and being faithful unto death will be the means of the feet members' going off the earthly scene; the persecution will result in Elijah's translation to heaven.

There are multiple times of trouble. The symbolic "whirlwind" is the Church's time of trouble. Next will come mystic Babylon's time of trouble and then the Great Company's time of trouble, in which they will wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

Review and Antitype

The Pastor gave the four places, or stops, date fulfillments when the Church expected to be translated. Thus he saw that the locations represented dates. However, the completion of the Church did not occur at any of these dates.

Gilgal	=	1874
Bethel	=	1878
Jericho	=	1881
Jordan	=	1914

These four places do represent dates, but they are *later* dates, as the following reasoning shows.

1. Elijah's life pictures the Church *sequentially and chronologically* from 539 on. If the earlier time periods indicate dates (such as 3 1/2 years being 1,260 days, or the years from 539 to 1799), and if Mount Horeb, a place name, is the date 1914, then the place names here also represent dates—*later dates in sequence*.

2. At these four dates, the Church expected to receive its change. However, only in 1914 did a significant number expect to go, for World War I seemed to be an event marking the time for the rapture—much as Christians at the French Revolution thought 1799 marked the end of the Church. But *very few* expected the Church to be complete in 1878 and 1881. And in 1874, the seventh messenger had not even been selected, let alone alerted to Jesus' invisible return, so there was no expectation of the Church's change at this date. And the Millerite movement expected 1844, which was even further back. We can read in the *Reprints* that the Pastor thought he would be changed in 1878, but the movement was just getting started, so any others were very small in number. But 1914 was a *great* disappointment. Then the Pastor suggested that possibly 1918 was the year the Church would be raptured. Therefore, one reason we think the dates for the four stops are subsequent to 1914 is the difficulty in seeing that the Church expected to be taken in all four dates the Pastor suggested.

When we consider Elijah's life as a chronogram, the dates begin to sort out. The 1,260 days when Elijah was in the wilderness ended in the year 1799. The next significant date was Elijah's one-day journey from Beer-sheba into the wilderness on his journey to Mount Horeb, or Sinai. Before getting to Mount Horeb, he had two sleeps under a tree and two meals. After the first sleep, he was given food; then he slept again and was awakened and given a more substantial meal. On the strength of that second meal, Elijah journeyed 40 days/years to Mount Horeb, the Christian destination, and many thousands thought the change of the Church would take place in 1914. But at Mount Horeb (Sinai), Elijah was instructed to go to Damascus to do three anointings, and several things have already happened subsequent to Sinai (see 1 and 2 Kings).

Thus far we have 1,260 days, one day, the first awakening in 1829, the Millerite movement with a cake and a cruse of water from 1829 to 1844, the second sleep until 1874, and the 40-year Harvest until 1914 at Mount Horeb. After that, *after 1914*, Elijah picked up Elisha, and they went to Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan. A third sleep is shown in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, and that sleep was subsequent to the disappointment of 1914 when the Church was not taken. Ever since 1914, there has not been the diligence in studying future events—that is, not until very recently, relatively speaking—and that interest is due to current events.

There is evidence, or proof, that the sleep of the wise and foolish virgins was subsequent to 1914. The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins begins, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish" (Matt. 25:1,2). However, Matthew 24 concludes with the faithful and wise servant, who feeds the household of faith, and also an evil servant, who beats his fellow servants. In the next chapter, where Jesus was having the *same discussion* on the Mount of Olives, is the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. It is interesting that Elisha came into the picture after Mount Horeb (Sinai), that is, after 1914. Of course there was a Great Company class earlier, but *in this dispensational setting*, Elijah pictures the wise and Elisha is a secondary class. Elisha was like a valet and a companion, but he was not on the level of Elijah, who was a prophet. Thus both the Elijah-Elisha picture and the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins continue after 1914. In fact, 1914 *starts* the Ten Virgins Parable.

The point is that the four places, or stops, can be advanced to four dates when a *significant* number expected the rapture, as follows:

1. *Gilgal* = 1918 = "wheel" or "revolution." There was a turning over, or turmoil, in the

movement after the Pastor died. The Johnsonites, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Pastoral Bible Institute, and the Stand Fast movement all sprang up, with some emphasizing *earthly* hopes.

2. *Bethel = 1925 = "house of God."* At that date, the Society had the name of the Truth movement, for the Judge took over when the Pastor died—he kept the building and changed the teachings. He also had a mansion built in California, and it was expected that in 1925 the Ancient Worthies would be resurrected. A miscalculation of the Jubilee cycles as a 49-year period, not 50 years, gave this date.

3. *Jericho = 1954 = "new moon."* In the lunar calendar, there was a new moon every 29 days. If we add 1925 + 29, the sum is 1954, hence a confirmation of the date. This date was a prominent Bible Student expectation based on an error in calculating the decree of Cyrus.

4. *Jordan = 1994 = "judged down."* If this date is correct, based on the 120-year parallel of Noah, much is likely to happen then, including witness work and the change of the feet members.

When the waters parted and Elijah and Elisha crossed the river Jordan to the other side, Elijah asked, "What shall I do for you, Elisha?" They went on just a little way, and then Elijah was translated. We suggested that the Church might be complete in the latter part of 1994.

Q: What is the antitypical significance of going over on dry ground?

A: Elijah's message, which will be one of notoriety, will tell the true condition of Christendom. Circumstances will arise to show the shallowness, the emptiness, and the lack of real spirituality in the nominal system. Its false claims will be exposed, and its union with the state will be called spiritual harlotry, for, as the Apostle James said, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4). In the workplace, the Christian has to associate with other employees, but he should make a barrier against having close friends in the world because they have completely different concepts and are pleasure-oriented. Their thinking would pollute, downgrade, and lead the Christian astray. Therefore, for the church to join hands with the state is completely wrong.

Back to the question. Elijah's going over *dry-shod* means that the smiting message will be given in *relative* peace. Similarly, there was a momentary period of popularity before John the Baptist's beheading and before Jesus' apprehension leading to his crucifixion. Shortly after the crossing of Jordan, Elijah was translated—*suddenly!* His translation harmonizes with the closing of the door in the Ten Virgins Parable. Then "they that were ready went in with him [Jesus] to the marriage: and the door was shut" (Matt. 25:10). When the last members of the Little Flock go beyond the veil, they will not tarry in earth's atmosphere but will go in to the *marriage*. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). From the "air," earth's atmosphere, they will go to the marriage.

Q: Mark 13:35 mentions four watches: even, midnight, cockcrow, and morning. Do these dates dovetail with the four dates in the Elijah picture—1918, 1925, 1954, and possibly 1994? The feet members will be taken in the last, or fourth, watch.

A: Yes.

The "sons of the prophets" are an unconsecrated class that show an interest—but not as much interest as Elisha (the Great Company), who are not in the category of Elijah. The word "sons," or children, indicated a family relationship back there, and of course the sons of Israel's prophets knew what their fathers were teaching. In the antitype, the sons of the prophets

would be family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc., who show interest. And the term “sons of the prophets” would include the Holy Remnant, handpicked Jews who will live through Jacob’s Trouble. As time goes on, the Holy Remnant will get more and more interested, wondering if the nation of Israel will perish. Especially when the last invasion takes place and Israel is not winning, the Holy Remnant will search their own hearts and seek forgiveness from God for wrongs done. This heart attitude will help bring them to Jesus. They will be like doves and go into the clefts of the rock and mourn. The Holy Remnant will become very introspective about what is going on and their relationship to God, and they will survive the trouble.

Comment: As presented in the Song of Solomon study, the fifth chapter confirms that the “sons of the prophets” will become Israelites, that is, the Holy Remnant. A transformation will take place when the Great Company witnesses to them after the Little Flock is off the scene. At first, the “watchmen” will be hostile, but then they will begin to inquire of the Great Company. The Holy Remnant are specifically addressed at the end of the chapter.

Reply: Yes, based on individual zeal and hunger at the end of the age, the Lord will greatly accelerate one’s understanding of God’s Word.

2 Kings 2:12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

When Elisha saw Elijah go up into heaven in a whirlwind, he cried, “My father, my father,” indicating that he recognized Elijah as his superior. Elisha continued, “The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!” What is the significance of the rest of his exclamation?

Comment: If the chariot is considered to be the coming church-state system, then Israel would picture the nominal Church. Thus it will be the chariot of nominal spiritual Israel. The “horses” are the doctrines, and the “horsemen” are the proponents of those doctrines. The chariot will be the conveyance for the spiritual change of the feet members.

Reply: Indirectly the chariot will act as an escort, or aid, to change Elijah from the earth to the spirit realm. Some who crucified Jesus thought they were doing God a favor, and in a sense, they were, for Jesus had to die as the Ransom for the world. Jesus’ persecution eventuated in his deliverance, for he had to leave the earth to receive his inheritance for his faithfulness. Thus the suffering resulted in a blessing to Jesus, the Church, and the world—to be seen in its fullness in due time.

As evidenced by his exclamation in the type, Elisha had an immediate sensation of *loss* when Elijah was translated. “My father, my father” indicates that Elijah was like a patriarch in Elisha’s eyes.

In the antitype, the chariot can be considered from two standpoints. (1) As the conveyance to take the Church home, it was a chariot of *blessing*—as being of the Lord. (2) But from the earthly perspective, the *enemy* seemed to be triumphing. The feet members will get their change through persecution and death as a result of their faithfulness.

But there is another aspect of Elisha’s situation to consider. The change of Elijah was expected to some extent. At Bethel and Jericho, Elisha accompanied Elijah, expecting the latter to be taken off his “head”; that is, Elisha knew that Elijah would be providentially *lifted and taken from him* in some manner. Consider that previously, several times in his life, Elijah had been translated. For example, when the storm was coming, he ran ahead of Ahab’s chariot (1 Kings 18:44-46). And a comment was made during Elijah’s ministry about his being taken from one

place and put down in another (1 Kings 18:9-12). The report would come that Elijah was at one place, but when Ahab tried to apprehend him, the prophet was at another place because the Lord had translated him. Hence the idea of Elijah's being translated was not necessarily unusual. We think, therefore, that Elisha knew there would be a translation, but he did not know exactly how it would happen. He knew that Elijah would be taken off his head—that Elijah would not just be removed but would be lifted up, or elevated, above his head. Then Elisha would be prophet in Elijah's stead.

This explanation helps us to understand the antitype, for as we get nearer and nearer the change of the feet members, it will be known that persecution will occur and be instrumental in that change. However, how that information will be acted upon—and how soon—will possibly determine who is of the Elijah class and who is of the Elisha class. Both classes know there will be a division at the end of the age, and as we get closer to that time, the details will keep clarifying in view of historical events. Certain details in the study of prophecy have clarified considerably since the Pastor's day.

The change of the feet members will be recognized as imminent but indefinite as to the exact moment, as shown by Elijah's response to Elisha's request. When Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken away," Elisha replied, "Let a similar portion of your spirit be upon me." Elijah's answer was, "You have asked a hard thing, but *if you see me go*, you will receive a duplicate portion of the Holy Spirit [that is, Elijah's mantle of authority]." All along, both of them knew that at some point, the separation and change would occur, but as they went from place to place, it did not happen. Finally, Elijah was translated, and those of the Elisha class who were alert discerned what had happened. Thus the antitype for the setting here in 2 Kings 2 shows general agreement and expectation that Elijah's change will come, but with the exact moment not being known, the consecrated live expectantly at the end of the age.

Comment: When Elisha asked for the double portion, it seems significant that *Elijah* had to initiate the conversation. This shows a lack, or a slackness, in the Elisha class because they do not act of their own volition. Elisha should have *run* to Elijah and *pleaded* with him: "Give me a like portion of your spirit!"

Reply: In other words, the Elijah class will stimulate the interest of the Elisha class.

Comment: In regard to why Elisha called Elijah "my father," a *Reprint* article said that Elisha had been Elijah's close servant for more than ten years and that their relationship was like father and son. Therefore, the request for the "double portion" was like asking for the double portion of a firstborn son. The request would have been along worldly lines.

Reply: Personally, we do not feel that is the answer because the same expression is used later, and certainly the explanation would not fit there (2 Kings 13:14).

Q: Why were the words "my father" repeated?

A: The repetition was a form of emphasis. When Elijah was taken up by the whirlwind, Elisha felt a loss similar to the emotion experienced at the death of a loved one who has the hope, or expectation, of a marvelous spiritual change. We know the death is for his benefit, but we miss him, nevertheless. Thus the immediate emotion of the one left behind is not one of joy. Later comes the realization of gladness that the Lord took the individual home.

"And he [Elisha] saw him [Elijah] no more: and he [Elisha] took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces." Of course Elisha's act showed sorrow and remorse, but what do the "two pieces" signify?

Comment: The Temple veil was rent into two pieces at the time of Jesus' death on the Cross. There the rending meant the *opening* of the high calling, the new and living way, and here it means the *closing* of the high calling.

Q: Would Elisha's tearing his garment indicate that the *one* hope of the high calling ends with the completion of the Elijah class and that henceforth God will deal with the Great Company as a class?

A: Or we could say that one piece represents Elijah's being taken away, and the other piece pictures what is left.

Still another signification of the two pieces is that Elisha represents two classes: the Great Company and the Ancient Worthies. From now on, we have to watch Elisha closely, for, as a *double* picture, his representation will change. As time goes on—that is, sometime after he crosses the Jordan River the second time—Elisha will take on the characteristics of the Ancient Worthies.

2 Kings 2:13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

2 Kings 2:14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

Elisha took Elijah's mantle and went back and stood by the Jordan River. Then he used the mantle to smite the waters, and the waters "parted hither and thither" as before. Elisha crossed back over to the west side of the river.

Comment: Elisha could not use his own mantle, for he had just torn it in two.

Comment: The fact Elijah first had the mantle shows that the feet members will have the insight, or the interpretation, of prophecy. Elisha's picking up the mantle indicates that after the Church is complete, the Great Company will carry on.

Reply: In other words, the mantle represents the authority of the Word of God. The power of the Holy Spirit now rested on Elisha, for he became the prophet in Elijah's stead.

Q: Does the foolish virgins' going out to get more oil for their lamps tie in here?

A: There is a relationship, but we have to go back earlier. When Elijah asked Elisha, "What can I do for you?" Elisha's reply was, "I want a double portion of the spirit." The tie-in comes when the foolish virgins *asked* for the oil. Here Elisha already has the mantle (comparable to the foolish virgins' having the oil when they came back from the marketplace). Both pictures are very informative, but they give slightly different perspectives of the same subject matter. Putting the two pictures together gives a fullness of understanding. When the foolish virgins got the oil, they came back.

The Elijah-Elisha picture started after Mount Horeb, when Elijah picked up Elisha. At that point, after the faithful and wise servant and the evil servant at the end of Matthew 24, the next chapter, which is a continuation, begins with the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. If that parable is linked with the Elijah picture, it starts when Elisha was plowing with oxen and then joined Elijah, and they went to the four places, or stops (1 Kings 19:19-21).

When Elisha smote the Jordan, he asked, “Where is the LORD God of Elijah?” Elisha had the mantle, so he had the authority, but striking the water was the *manifestation* of that authority. Thus Elisha was importuning the God of Elijah to help him smite the Jordan as Elijah had done earlier.

The fact Elisha did not fold the mantle or go over Jordan dry-shod shows his message will be a little more general than Elijah’s. It will not be as concise and sharp, but it will have an effect.

Q: Will the Elisha class smite the Jordan after Babylon falls? Will the smiting take place during that little period of time before the world goes into anarchy, while the governments are still intact? The reason for the question is that whatever Elisha’s message is might add to the fear that the kings of the earth feel when they stand afar off and tremble, seeing the smoke of Babylon’s burning and knowing the trouble is coming next upon them (Rev. 18:9,10).

A: It would take a little time to show, but there is an integration of another picture that we have not come to yet. However, Revelation 18 is related. We have to get a feel for the subject first, rather than to prematurely go into that picture in detail. But we would like to point out that the Elisha message will follow Elijah’s message *relatively soon*, as shown by other pictures.

Q: Does Elisha’s crossing the Jordan mean the death of the Great Company?

A: No—and neither did Elijah’s crossing the Jordan mean his death. After the waters were divided and Elijah crossed over, he went a little distance before the chariot of fire appeared. However, the chariot and horses of fire were a reaction to his smiting message. The parting of the waters means that some will be for and some will be against the message. The two went across without being molested—momentarily. When anger is vented in the antitype, only *handpicked* members—the Elijah class—will be translated. Both classes will be *together* when Elijah smites the Jordan, but when the leaders react, their anger will be directed against the Elijah class. Elijah did the smiting, but Elisha was right there as his companion. Similarly, when Jesus was apprehended in Gethsemane, he said, “Let the others alone. I am the one you are looking for.” Only Jesus was arrested and crucified.

Comment: This separation is shown in Luke 17:34-36, where *two* are working in the field, lying in the same bed, or grinding at the mill, but only *one* is taken.

Reply: The principle is given in Isaiah 28:10, “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” We would add, “Here a picture, there a picture,” and this premise has been observed relatively recently. The Pastor gave us a *vocabulary* of understanding, but the *details* of understanding come subsequently, in due season, as needed.

Elisha gave a smiting message along different lines than Elijah’s. One proof is that no fiery chariot of fire came on the scene. An anti-Semitic feeling exists in large parts of Europe, and there is an undercurrent in this country that has not been fanned yet. The future message will favor Israel, and it will be explicit and scriptural enough that none will be able to deny it. If the message is done with clarity, then anyone who finds fault with it would have to find fault with the Bible. However, that does not mean anti-Semitic feelings will change, for such individuals never had the spirit of conversion. Therefore, Elisha’s message will divide opinion and have an effect on the sons of the prophets. This reasoning fits in with Song 5:7-16. The subject gets more complicated as we proceed, but it dovetails with a number of other pictures and Scriptures.

2 Kings 2:15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they

said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

2 Kings 2:16 And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

2 Kings 2:17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

Previously sons of the prophets had seen Elijah and Elisha cross the Jordan River *together*. They saw the waters part and the two continuing on out of sight. Thus they did not see either the chariot and horses of fire or the translation of Elijah. Now some of the sons of the prophets observed Elisha smiting the Jordan and crossing the river—and coming back *alone*. When they saw the waters part as before, they concluded that Elijah’s ability or power was now in the hands of Elisha, so he could do what Elijah had done previously. The sons of the prophets knew that Elisha was subservient to Elijah originally, for they had gone to Elisha privately and asked, “Don’t you know that your master will be taken off your head today?” They knew that there was a disparity between Elijah and Elisha originally and that Elijah was superior. Now, when Elisha came back alone, the sons of the prophets were puzzled, so they inquired as to where Elijah was. Elijah’s absence develops a significant picture in the antitype. Elisha was convinced that Elijah had been taken, for he had seen the whirlwind, but the sons of the prophets asked, “Where is Elijah?” Knowing that Elijah was more important than Elisha, they wanted to see him. If something had happened to Elijah, they wanted to honor him or in some way show their appreciation by giving him a decent burial or whatever.

The antitype is very significant, for it reveals a *time period*. For three days (*years*), the sons of the prophets will search for Elijah before being convinced that Elisha was right in saying they would not find him. They embarrassed Elisha by persisting in their request to search for Elijah. The type shows that from the death of the feet members, at least three years will elapse before the sons of the prophets are convinced that “Elijah” has been taken. And Elisha will still be here, for they came back to him (verse 18).

Q: It will take a little time (perhaps six months, the second half of the hour of power?) for the Elisha class to get a sufficiency of the Holy Spirit to do the smiting work, which the sons of the prophets observe. Therefore, could the three days, when the sons of the prophets are aware of the situation but are not fully convinced, be *parts* of three years?

A: Yes.

Comment: In verse 16, the sons of the prophets said, “Perhaps God took Elijah up and cast him down on [that is, translated him to] some mountain or valley.” Here is another proof that Elijah had been translated at various times previously.

Reply: Yes.

Q: Were the sons of the prophets the children of the consecrated?

A: In the antitype, they are an unconsecrated class, and there are two interpretations: (1) children, neighbors, relatives, friends, etc., of the consecrated and (2) the Holy Remnant of Israel. The Holy Remnant will have an awakening, for “blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:25). In other words, blindness will

basically prevail until the Church is complete, for the Little Flock is the chief thrust of the Kingdom class in this age. Then the Great Company will have the privilege of a more intimate association in giving a message to Israel. An important point is shown in the type; namely, the Holy Remnant will recognize that the thrust, seed, or kernel of Elisha's knowledge came from *Elijah*, and they would prefer to meet with and know about him. But as time goes on after Elijah's translation, Elisha will assume great importance. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, Elisha and the sons of the prophets will recognize the relative superiority of the Elijah class.

Q: Does this reasoning help to explain why Elisha was "ashamed" (verse 17)? If the sons of the prophets keep insisting they want to find Elijah, Elisha will be ashamed that he had not been more zealous to begin with.

A: Yes. It would also show the origin of the message. The "pioneer" is one who *opens* doors. It is not as much to the credit of the ones who just step in and take advantage of the already opened door. Credit goes to the one the Lord uses to break the barrier of understanding.

This principle of recognition going to Elijah is also seen in the Jehu picture (2 Kings 9:36). After Elijah was off the scene, Jehu recognized his importance above that of Elisha, yet Elisha was more closely identified with the anointing of Jehu. (A son of the prophets was sent to Jehu by *Elisha*—2 Kings 9:1.) Jehu was a captain of the guard at Ramoth-gilead, and the message was that the God of Israel had anointed him to be king in Jehoram's stead. Moreover, Jehu had companions who also knew about Elijah. This suggests that in the not-too-distant future, a message will be given by Elijah. Although the effect will not be realized right away, the seed thoughts will be in the minds of the sons of the prophets, Jehu, and his companions.

The sons of the prophets at Jericho said to Elisha, "Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley." And Elisha said, "Ye shall not send." With regard to the 50 "strong" sons of the prophets who kept urging Elisha to let them search for Elijah until he finally relented, there is parallel information in Song of Solomon 5:7-16. When the antitypical "watchmen" class, the "daughters of Jerusalem"—that is, the Holy Remnant—become interested in a message of the little sister, they will seek Jesus. Incidentally, a confirmation of the identification of the "daughters of Jerusalem" is that the ten-tribe kingdom was called the "elder sister" and the two-tribe kingdom was the younger sister, both being "daughters" of their father Jacob and their mother Rachel (Ezek. 16:45,46, etc.).

There are two bedroom scenes in the Song of Solomon (3:1-4 and 5:2-6). The more developed big sister got up of her own volition and looked for the Lord and found him, whereas the little sister, who lacked the zeal of her older sister, was sleepy and made excuses. She heard the knock of Jesus but opened the door too late and found him gone. Then she searched for him in the city, and in that search, the watchmen of the city, who at first were hostile and abusive, became interested and wanted to join.

With regard to the coming persecution, not only will there be a triumvirate from the standpoint of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet, but also Jews, Catholics, and Protestants will try to reconcile their differences in this arrangement. In comparison, the Jews are so small in number that they are not mentioned in the prophecies of the Book of Revelation. However, some Jews would like to cooperate and break down the barriers of religious prejudice with Catholics and Protestants. During the persecution of the feet members, Jews will join the beast and the false prophet, for they will not want anarchy anymore than anyone else. But evidently, as time goes on, the Jews, who are thinkers, will begin to wonder if they are in the right camp. Thus their viewpoint will change.

The term “daughters of Jerusalem” sometimes refers to nominal spiritual Israel and sometimes to natural Israel depending on context, and there are times when the term applies to, or is a mixture of, both. In the Song of Solomon verses that were cited, the “watchmen” were watchers, and here in 2 Kings 2:3,5,7,15-18, the sons of the prophets both watched and viewed.

Q: Is it significant that 50 sons of the prophets are described as “fifty *strong men*”? Wouldn’t this description indicate a developing interest in the Holy Remnant? There were *many* sons of the prophets, but 50 were singled out.

A: Yes. Other Jews may “hear,” but the Holy Remnant will manifest interest. The Lord purposes to warn Israel what the situation is, and one class, the Holy Remnant, will respond. They will have a hearing ear in the sense of *heeding* the warning.

Comment: The King James marginal reference for “fifty strong men” is “fifty sons of strength,” which is a nice way of describing the Holy Remnant. They will be strong in *faith*.

Q: Will any of the sons of the prophets be spiritually minded?

A: Possibly some will become interested in the high calling, but in the corporate sense, their salvation will be on an earthly plane. The Scripture “blindness *in part* is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” allows the *possibility* that when the fullness of the Gentiles is accomplished, a few Israelites may be included; that is, a *remnant* of the *natural* Holy Remnant may become spiritual before the door is closed (Rom. 11:25).

Q: If the sons of the prophets search for Elijah for three years, how could they be well informed?

A: In the three-year period, the sons of the prophets will merge into the Holy Remnant class, and it will take time for them to hear and be convinced. Hence the three years are reasonable.

Q: Are the 50 sons of the prophets friends, family, etc., of the consecrated until Elisha smites the Jordan, and then they become the Holy Remnant?

A: That could well be.

Comment: That makes sense, for just as 50 of the sons of the prophets were “strong,” so some family members and friends are quite supportive of the consecrated, while others are opposed.

Q: How could children and friends of the consecrated doubt for so long where Elijah has gone?

A: Consider the natural standpoint. Suppose the last members are taken off to prison and no one knows where they are. Will the interest of friends and family stop just because their location is unknown? No. We cannot assume it will be publicly known who has been apprehended, where they have been taken, and when they are executed. Thus the interest can continue—just as it has with Vietnam War POWs. People still think they are alive and will not be convinced until they see a body or some other physical evidence or hear a testimony of their death.

Comment: In this case, Elisha will be there to convince them.

Reply: That is true, but the sons of the prophets did not believe him.

We must be careful not to overread a type and some of the words that are spoken. The Lord is

alerting us to focus on a particular subject. For instance, when the foolish virgins said to the wise virgins, “Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out,” it does not mean that all of the Great Company will make this request. *All* will feel their lack, but *not all* will address the Elijah class. Just as with the three days (years), details are recorded and woven into the account to give us information. God’s providence allows the recording so that the consecrated have the opportunity to be enlightened as to final events.

Comment: In verse 16, the sons of the prophets assumed that Elijah was nearby—that he had been translated to another physical location in the area.

Reply: If the Elijah class are apprehended and taken away, how will their coworkers, friends, family members, etc., know where they are? But the consecrated who are left behind will know the feet members have been taken because they will no longer be able to contact them.

Four pictures cast light on this situation from different facets: Song of Solomon 5, the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, 2 Kings 2, and the Book of Revelation. All of these pictures are needed for a fullness of understanding.

Common sense would say that some family members and friends are interested in the consecrated, but the depth of that interest is another matter. Those who have a deeper interest will want to be informed. Eventually Israel will be informed. The sons of the prophets will then be Jews in our day who are descendants of Israel’s prophets of old.

Comment: Israel will be calm while the rest of the world is going into anarchy, so the Holy Remnant in Israel will become contrite later on and pray for deliverance out of Jacob’s Trouble. This perspective helps to explain the three-year period, for the eyes of the Holy Remnant will not be opened immediately. A series of events will open their eyes.

Reply: In different words, the Time of Trouble will make the three years quite troublesome because the Church will be gone and Babylon will fall. When Babylon falls, there will be many problems in the world. The account does not tell what happened during the three days with regard to Elisha, but it does say that the sons of the prophets came back to him after their fruitless search. Thus Elisha was on the scene for the three years.

We think that the Elisha message to Israel will be given fairly early after the Elijah message. However, the reaction, the response, to that message will come three years later when the Holy Remnant sees events transpire as both Elisha and Elijah had predicted.

2 Kings 2:18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

When the sons of the prophets returned to Elisha, he said, “Didn’t I tell you it was a waste of time to search for Elijah?” They did not fully believe Elisha until three days (years) later.

2 Kings 2:19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

The men of Jericho said to Elisha, “The location of the city is pleasant, but the water is naught and the ground barren.” Today Jericho is fertile, and being the lowest city on earth, it has a tropical climate. The water, which flowed from the brook Cherith, came down from a height and was quite plentiful and fresh. Elijah had been providentially supported there during his sojourn of the 3 1/2-year famine. The problem now was that the water was bitter and poisoned, so the men asked Elisha to help.

2 Kings 2:20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

Elisha did not hem and haw but gave forthright, direct instructions to bring him a new cruse with salt in it. The men did so.

2 Kings 2:21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

2 Kings 2:22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

Elisha cast the salt from the new cruse into the spring of waters, and the salt purified the waters so that they “were healed unto this day,” that is, unto the time Ezra inserted verse 22, as well as up to the present time. “Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.”

Comment: Elisha represents the Ancient Worthies, and the “new cruse” would be the New Covenant. The salt, which purified the water at its source, the spring, represents the pure doctrine that will flow forth in the Kingdom.

Reply: The doctrine in the next age will not necessarily be sweet, but it will be pertinent to the land, the circumstance, and the people in their undone condition. The Apostle Paul said, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6). In other words, “Let your words be constructive.” Sometimes words that might be considered by some to be hurtful are really, from the true perspective, very helpful and constructive.

In a *Reprint* article, Pastor Russell came to the conclusion that Elisha represents the Great Company class earlier, but after crossing the Jordan, he pictures the Ancient Worthies because of the nature of the miracles he performed. The miracles represent work that will be done in the Kingdom Age. As *direct* representatives of The Christ, the Ancient Worthies will be more involved in the miracles than the Great Company. “Princes” of the regal line, they will carry out the instructions of the invisible Messiah and the Church in glory. This conclusion is further supported by Elisha’s tearing his garment into *two* pieces after Elijah’s departure, showing that he represents *two* classes.

Q: The city of verse 19 was literal Jericho, but in the antitype, would it picture Jerusalem, the capital of the Kingdom on earth?

A: Yes. Jerusalem will be “pleasant,” and the literal pure water that will issue forth from underneath the Third Temple will have healing qualities. Also, literal trees with fruitage will be along the banks of the river. Incidentally, Jericho is described in Scripture as “the city of palm trees,” and the name itself means “[new] moon,” indicating an association with the New Covenant (Judg. 1:16).

Comment: When the salt was put in the *water*, it was said, “There shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.” There will be death in the Kingdom Age but not from impure doctrine.

Reply: Yes, God will turn to the people “a pure language” so that they may all call upon His name and “serve him with one consent” (Zeph. 3:9). The implication is that the “language” of

today is not pure; the doctrine is mixed.

Comment: A scriptural precedent for Elisha's torn garment picturing two classes is when a prophet cut Jeroboam's garment into 12 pieces. The ten pieces given to Jeroboam represented the ten tribes, the northern kingdom, and the other two pieces represented the two tribes, the southern kingdom.

Reply: Yes. Elijah's mantle symbolizes the authority of God's Word. When Elisha antitypically picks up the mantle, that authority will be vested in the Great Company, and later it will go to the Ancient Worthies.

Q: Is there a tie-in with the Temple veil being rent in two by the earthquake when Jesus died?

A: With the rending of the Temple veil, the antitype shows that what was hidden for ages and generations, Jesus first revealed, or made known, only to the Israelites. He came and ministered to them, explaining the meaning of the gospel and bringing life and immortality to light. Subsequently his apostles clarified the details, and in due time, the gospel was opened to the Gentiles. The veil, the partition that was between the Jews, who already had God, and the Gentiles who were searching after and loved God if haply they could find Him, was removed, bringing the two classes together, that is, such as were in the right heart condition.

When Jesus began his earthly ministry, his first miracle was changing water into wine at the marriage in Cana (John 2:1-11). Not only did this miracle help to reveal Jesus as the Messiah at the First Advent, but also it represented that Jesus brought joyous doctrine at the beginning of His Second Advent with the six *Volumes* of truth (the antitypical six "waterpots"). The first miracle of the Kingdom will be the introduction of the truth, the purification of doctrine, as shown by salt being cast from the new cruse into the bitter water. Salt has a purifying effect, and a rod-of-iron rule will be required in the beginning of the Kingdom—a rule that is to the point and is exercised with *firmness and power*. When the Kingdom is fully in operation, the rod of iron will continue, but it will be used more cautiously. The first doctrine made known to the world will be that the Lord is present, that he is Immanuel, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah (Isa. 7:14). In all three cases—at the beginning of the First Advent, at the beginning of the Harvest at the end of the Gospel Age, and at the beginning of the Kingdom—the emphasis is on TRUTH.

2 Kings 2:23 And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

Elisha had left Jericho and was following the uphill route to Bethel. Earlier Bethel was the first stop after Gilgal. Now Elisha was reversing direction in his somewhat circuitous route: Jordan, Jericho, Bethel.

As Elisha "was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city [of Bethel], and mocked him," saying, "Go up, you bald head; go up, you bald head." The "little children" were probably in their late teens. This Hebrew expression is used in various ways in other contexts, from the thought of a relatively young child up to an old teenager. To emphasize "little children" in verse 23 would rob the picture of the reality and their responsibility.

Thus a number of lads came forth from Bethel and mocked Elisha's bald head. When they saw Elisha approaching Bethel, they went down the hill to taunt him with the words "Go up the hill, you bald head!" The repetition of the taunt suggests that these teenagers had definitely reached the age of responsibility.

2 Kings 2:24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

Elisha cursed the lads in the name of Jehovah. Then two female bears came out of the woods and “tare” 42 of them. The Pastor gave an ameliorated, or very moderate, explanation in saying that the “she bears” merely wounded, or mauled, the 42, but we feel that the bears killed them, picturing Second Death. This incident represents those who will not listen to the voice of “that prophet.” “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23). In other words, such individuals will question the authority, or the office, of the Ancient Worthies, whose word will be law. The Lord is not bound to give everyone every opportunity of repentance, for a lot depends on an individual’s heart condition. If a person refuses to listen, that is his problem.

2 Kings 2:25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

From Bethel, Elisha went to Mount Carmel—that is, he went from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea—and then returned to Samaria. He traversed the whole breadth of the nation before returning to Samaria, where many of his later activities took place. His purpose in going to Mount Carmel is not stated, but that is where Elijah had held the contest with the prophets of Baal. Apparently, Elisha was not with Elijah at that time, but he would have heard about the contest. Perhaps Elisha went to Mount Carmel as a memorial.

Q: Elisha was at Mount Carmel when the Shunammite woman asked him to come heal her sick son (2 Kings 4:25). Could Mount Carmel have been a retreat, a place he visited from time to time, a little headquarters, for she knew where to find him?

A: News of Elisha’s travels and whereabouts would have been known, for he was the prophet in Elijah’s stead.

Q: This same woman suggested that a room be built for Elisha to stay in because she perceived that he was a “holy man of God” (2 Kings 4:8-10). Elisha often passed that way and stayed in the room. Does this indicate that he followed a circuit?

A: He did later, after a time interval of perhaps two or three years, but not at the time of the second chapter. Since Elisha was making his first trip to Mount Carmel, this would be the start of his circuit. Before that, he was Elijah’s servant and companion.

2 Kings 3:1 Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.

Jehoram, Ahab’s son, ascended the throne in Samaria and reigned for 12 years. Elisha was the Lord’s prophet in this central district, and from there, he journeyed from place to place like Samuel many years earlier.

2 Kings 3:2 And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made.

Jehoram did evil but not like the sins of his father Ahab and his mother Jezebel. Thus there are *degrees* of evil, and God makes certain distinctions. Jehoram was not as bad as his parents, for he put away the image of Baal that Ahab had made.

Jehoram reigned in the capital city, so he occupied the house of Ahab, and in those living quarters was the statue of Baal, which was repugnant to him. He knew that the very act of destroying the image would cause a problem, for Jezebel's influence was still quite strong. (She outlived Ahab and was still alive.)

2 Kings 3:3 Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

Nevertheless, he committed the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Jehoram had a hard time separating from those sins.

Jeroboam was the first king of the ten tribes when the split in the nation occurred in the days after Solomon's death. Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, but when a rebellion occurred early in his reign, Jeroboam led the ten tribes astray.

2 Kings 3:4 And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

Moab was east of the Dead Sea. For Mesha, the king of Moab and a great "sheepmaster," to be able to give 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams, with their wool, to King Ahab of Israel means that many more sheep were still in Moab, for surely Mesha did not make himself a pauper. Imagine seeing so many sheep being driven and guided from Moab across the Jordan River at Jericho and all the way up to Samaria! This was a tremendous tribute to render to Ahab.

2 Kings 3:5 But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

When Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled and refused to pay tribute. Although Ahab was weak morally, he was apparently quite strong militarily.

Q: A similar statement was made in 2 Kings 1:1, "Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab." Verse 17 of the same chapter states that Ahaziah died and Jehoram reigned in his stead. How does the timing of that rebellion fit in with the rebellion here in chapter 3?

A: Probably the rebellion of the king of Moab started under the short reign of Ahaziah, and it became a more open revolt under Jehoram. Obviously, Mesha wanted to curry Ahab's favor, but after the latter died, there was not the same feeling toward his successors.

Today the land of Moab is extremely fertile, but the population is sparse, for the Lord's curse was on the Moabites. Called Jordan now, the land is traversed by the new King's Highway, which goes all the way down to Aqaba. Only in northern Jordan (the Gilead area) and Amman are there much population, activity, and industry. The port of Aqaba is used as a transit route with trucks going from there up to Baghdad, but if one gets off the road a little ways, there is no population in southern Jordan, relatively speaking, and Petra is virtually empty.

"When Ahab was dead, ... the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel." Ahab was dead when Ahaziah ascended the throne and reigned for two years and also when Jehoram became king. Moab rebelled under the reigns of both Ahaziah and Jehoram, resulting in a secession from union with northern Israel.

Q: Did the Moabites worship Baal too?

A: Yes, and other gods as well. Different names were used, but the gods were more or less the

same. That was also true of Egypt, Rome, Asia Minor, etc. For example, triune gods (mother, father, and son) were worshipped under different names in Greece, Rome, Turkey, and India. Baal was worshipped in quite a large area and given a name in the local language.

2 Kings 3:6 And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel.

King Jehoram numbered all the men of war in the ten tribes to fight against Moab because that country had rebelled, refusing to pay tribute. The numbering was like a draft in preparation for battle.

2 Kings 3:7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.

As in the days of Micaiah, when Ahab and Jehoshaphat joined forces to fight to recover Ramoth-gilead, Jehoram now joined with the same Jehoshaphat of Judah. Again Jehoshaphat said, "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses" (1 Kings 22:4). The land of Moab was east of the Dead Sea, but it bordered one of the ten tribes, so it was logical that Moab would be tributary to Israel.

2 Kings 3:8 And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.

Probably it was Jehoram who asked, "Which way shall we go up?" Then Jehoshaphat replied, "The way through the wilderness of Edom," which meant going through his own kingdom.

2 Kings 3:9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.

With the king of Edom being sympathetic to their cause and joining them, the kings of Israel and Judah made a seven-day circuitous route through Judah to the south end of the Dead Sea and then went up the east side of the sea through Edom, which bordered Moab on the north. This was a "backdoor" approach, for Jehoram had suggested the battle, and with one of the ten tribes bordering Moab, the attack would be expected to come through that particular tribe in the territory of the northern kingdom. Thus the route chosen was a surprise approach, which made their problem of a shortage of water more understandable. The fighting host was not familiar with the mountainous territory, and water was crucial for both the men and the cattle that followed them.

2 Kings 3:10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

The "three kings" were the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom. Apparently, Jehoram felt that the lack of water was retribution for the sins of Ahab and that the Lord had providentially led the three kings into hard times as a judgment. He reasoned that they had been led into a trap, and they were now in desperate straits.

2 Kings 3:11 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

Again as in the Micaiah account, Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not here a prophet of the LORD,

that we may inquire of the LORD by him?” (1 Kings 22:7). His question shows that he worshipped Jehovah in a more proper way than Jehoram. Ostensibly the prophets of both the northern and the southern kingdoms were prophets of the Lord God, but the prophets of the ten tribes were actually of Baal and Jezebel. One of Jehoram’s servants answered Jehoshaphat, “Here is Elisha, who was a servant of Elijah, pouring water on his hands.”

2 Kings 3:12 And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

The kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom went down to meet and inquire of Elisha.

2 Kings 3:13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

Elisha told Jehoram to go to the prophets of Baal (of his father Ahab) and to the prophets of Jezebel (his mother). The kings of Israel and Judah were in hard circumstances in Edom, a territory they were not familiar with. Jehoram, who had initiated the idea of going to battle with Moab, was the spokesman, the leader. If Jehoshaphat had not questioned Jehoram’s wisdom and asked for the counsel of a prophet of God, the king of Israel would have made all the decisions. Jehoram still thought that God was leading the three kings into a trap with Moab.

2 Kings 3:14 And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.

Elisha said to Jehoram, “If it were not for Jehoshaphat, God would not hearken to you.” God’s favor was more with Judah than it was with the ten tribes at this juncture in history.

2 Kings 3:15 But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.

Elisha asked that a minstrel be brought to him. He made this request because he had to be in an atmosphere of peace, quietness, and prayer *before* he would become amenable to receiving the Holy Spirit in this troublesome circumstance where he did not want to fraternize with Jehoram. In other words, Elisha knew that “the hand of the LORD” would come upon him when the minstrel played. Incidentally, the use of music to create the right atmosphere in connection with an oracle was quite common in almost every nation on earth at this time in history. With the Lord’s people, the minstrel probably used a harp and sang a psalm. Similarly, today our study and testimony meetings usually begin with a prayer and a hymn to shut out the influence of the world and to create an atmosphere of reverence in which to meditate.

Verse 15 shows that although Elisha was a prophet of the Lord, he could not normally, without preparation, just mechanically prophesy. First, he had to become receptive to the indwelling of the Spirit, and then he could pronounce a prophecy. Because he had to be brought into special harmony with the Lord for this purpose, it was obvious that the Lord was supplying the information and not Elisha himself. Also, by this method, the prophet was not given undue attention or recognition.

2 Kings 3:16 And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches.

2 Kings 3:17 For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet

that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.

Elisha said, “Thus saith the LORD.” In other words, God audibly spoke to him, probably in the inner ear, and those around the prophet heard nothing. The instruction was to “make this valley full of ditches.” Apparently, the valley was a relatively narrow wadi that was dry during certain seasons of the year. When a flash flood occurred, the water coursed rapidly through the wadi. In this case, by having the host prepare the land in advance by digging canals as branches off the main wadi, God would cause a flash flood, and water would flow into the canals over a broader territory, thus providing more water for a longer period of time.

Comment: It took *faith* for the men to exert the *effort* to dig the canals, especially when they did not have water to drink.

Moreover, God said, “You shall see neither wind nor rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water so that you, your cattle, and your horses may drink.” The prophet saw the result by the eye of faith and by believing what the Lord had told him, for no evidence of an approaching storm or a thundercloud would have been visible. In other words, God would cause a flash flood elsewhere, off in the distance, and water would *suddenly* flow down into the valley. We can be sure the host moved to higher ground and waited in anticipation.

2 Kings 3:18 And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.

2 Kings 3:19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.

The kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom would get the victory, but they were to punish the Moabites by cutting off their food and water supply for a while so that they would be reduced to a humble state as a tributary of the northern kingdom.

2 Kings 3:20 And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

At the time of a morning sacrifice to the Lord—and almost like an answer to their petition in connection with this offering—water indeed came and filled the whole country.

2 Kings 3:21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border.

Hearing that a coalition of the three kings was coming to fight against them, the Moabites put on their armor and got ready for the battle.

2 Kings 3:22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood:

The Moabites rose up early the next morning—the morning that followed the sacrifice of the Israelites’ meal offering. The sun shone upon the water, and through a mirage, the reflection of the sun gave the water a reddish hue. The Moabites concluded that the water was blood because they had never seen water there before. (The water from the flash flood had coursed through the valley in the main wadi bed and then flowed into the newly dug canals.) The providential deception was effective.

2 Kings 3:23 And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.

2 Kings 3:24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country.

Thinking the three kings and their armies had slaughtered one another in an internecine conflict, the Moabites hastened to take a spoil and to plunder, but instead the confederacy proved to be an ambush against them. When the Moabites got to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote them, catching the Moabites off guard and disorganized.

2 Kings 3:25 And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

Thus the Israelites surprised and defeated the Moabites. They obeyed God's instructions by overthrowing cities, marring the land with stones, stopping wells, and felling all the good trees. The Israelites followed this procedure, but they did not take the town of Kir-haraseth (called Kerak today) because it was on a height and was extremely well fortified. Therefore, instead of expending time and effort trying to capture that town, they left it alone.

On one of the Bible land tours, we visited the city of Kerak in Transjordan. The Romans used that city as a garrison to keep the land under subjection, and they even built storage bins and an aqueduct. There we saw a good example of how the Romans made arches because one arch was left only partially constructed. Stones were laid on bagged filler material that was shaped with a curved top. The stones were balanced so that by thrust and gravity, they would adhere with either a minimum of cement or no cement at all. Then the bags of filler material were removed, leaving a beautiful arch. A tremendous amount of labor was expended to prepare the filler material, which was used for both construction and embellishment purposes.

In the temples in Egypt, giant pylons were made with filler material. The ceiling and the columns were constructed similarly, and then hieroglyphs were carved. In adorning the walls and columns with carvings, painting, etc., the laborers did not use any ladders but instead stood on the bags of filler material. After embellishing the top of the columns, they removed a layer of filler material and worked on the next level down, etc.

2 Kings 3:26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

2 Kings 3:27 Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.

The Moabites saw that they had lost, so the king of Moab sacrificed his own son on the wall, thus demonstrating that the battle had gone far enough. The sacrifice took place on the wall high up at Kir-haraseth in the sight of all below (the three kings and their armies). Moab had great indignation against Israel. Then Israel, Judah, and Edom returned to their own land.

Whether or not this account is a type is conjectural. Lot was Abraham's nephew, and Moab was one of Lot's sons. Abraham, accompanied by Lot, left Ur of the Chaldees and journeyed to the

land the Lord had promised to give him. When Lot and Abraham separated, Lot chose the fruitful valley in the Dead Sea area (Gen. 13:8-12). This was the first of three major separations. The second major separation occurred when Hagar and Ishmael were put out. With Isaac being the son of choice, enmity developed and the separation took place. Consequently, Ishmael's children went beyond the Dead Sea. The third major separation was Jacob and Esau, and Esau went to Edom. Thus the Moabites, the Ishmaelites, and the Edomites all went east of the Dead Sea.

If the account here in 2 Kings 3 is a type, the Moabites would represent an Arab power. Edom, too, was an alien power, and it is interesting that today there is a division in the Arab nations. In this chapter, Edom was on one side of the confrontation, and Moab was on the other side. With the faint possibility this chapter is a type, it might indicate a future defeat in some way.

As the Pastor suggested, Elisha became a type of the Ancient Worthies after he crossed the Jordan River because of certain acts that were of a miraculous nature. Of course we would not associate the battle scene in this chapter with the Ancient Worthies or the Kingdom. The curing of the bitter waters in the second chapter represents restitution work, and so will subsequent miracles. However, the restitution works of Elisha are not sequential. Although he is a picture of the Ancient Worthies in some of the coming scenes, he will also revert back to the type of the Great Company because the two kings, Hazael and Jehu, had not yet been anointed as Elijah was commissioned to do in 1 Kings 19:15-17.

In other words, after Elisha crossed the Jordan, he was not consistently a picture of the Ancient Worthies. The picture switches back and forth. Elisha's life was not sequential, unlike Elijah's. Since the anointings of Hazael and Jehu revert back to Elijah's original commission, Elisha pictures the Great Company for their fulfillment. Therefore, as previously stated, the rending of Elisha's mantle into two parts shows Elisha's dual role, which switches back and forth.

Based on Ezekiel 38:11,12, Israel must dwell confidently without walls before Jacob's Trouble comes at the end of the age. At present, the Jews have gas masks, and they expect war at any moment, so something has to happen to change the situation. Israel must be at rest before the final invasion from the north, but how this will transpire—how the nation will come to lay down arms and have peace—remains to be seen.

Q: Why were the “good trees” destroyed?

A: Deuteronomy 20:19,20 states that when an enemy's property was destroyed, the fruit trees were not to be hurt. Hence the “good trees” were used for other purposes, such as battering rams, siege towers, and building houses. With their wells stopped with big stones and their trees cut down, the humbled Moabites would be occupied with trying to restore the land and would not have time for war and vengeance.

Malachi 4:5,6 reads, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” At his First Advent, Jesus called attention to John the Baptist as doing a work of that nature in trying to turn the hearts of the Israelites and prepare them for his ministry. Jesus himself, as well as the Church after him, comprise the Elijah class in the *Gospel Age*. At Jesus' First Advent, the nation of Israel rejected him, and only the relative handful of individuals who received him were given the power to become the sons of God. However, Jesus also said, referring to the Elijah work in the *Kingdom Age*, “Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things [that is, do the converting work],” for at that time, the world *will be converted* (Matt. 17:11). In other words, the coming of Elijah is in two parts: (1) In the *Gospel Age*, he attempts to convert but is

unsuccessful, and (2) in the Kingdom Age, he will be successful.

Of course God's purpose during the present age is not a failure, for it has served the purpose of taking out of the Gentiles a people (*individuals* here and there) for His name (Acts 15:14). But in the Kingdom Age, every knee will have to bow and every tongue "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10,11).

2 Kings 4:1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

Verses 1-7 pertain to the multiplying of the widow's oil. A "certain woman," the widow of one of the sons of the prophets, cried out to Elisha, "The creditor is come to take ... my two sons to be bondmen." The Pastor suggested she was probably the wife of Obadiah (1 Kings 18:1-16). The governor of the house of Ahab, Obadiah had hidden 100 prophets of the Lord (in two groups of 50 each) in a cave and fed them. In order to feed the prophets, Obadiah borrowed money on his own, for if Ahab had known what was happening, the lives of the sons of the prophets would have been jeopardized. Now Obadiah was dead, and Jehoram was king, not Ahab. As a result of the borrowing, Obadiah left a debt that was passed on to his widow. She and her two sons were impoverished with only one vessel of oil left. Of course Elisha would help her by a miracle the Lord would perform on her behalf.

2 Kings 4:2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

2 Kings 4:3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

2 Kings 4:4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

2 Kings 4:5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

2 Kings 4:6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

2 Kings 4:7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

In response to the widow's appeal, Elisha told her to borrow many empty vessels from her neighbors. As instructed, she took the vessels inside and shut the door on her and her two sons and started pouring out from the one vessel into all the other vessels. The oil kept flowing until all the vessels were full. When she went and told Elisha that the vessels were full, he said, "Sell the oil, and pay the debt. Then you and your sons can live on the rest."

In the antitype, Elisha represents the Ancient Worthies, and the setting is the Kingdom Age. The woman may very well picture the nation of Israel, through whom the New Covenant will be made. If that is the case, the two sons represent the two divisions, the northern and southern kingdoms, Israel and Judah. The vessels that were filled represent individuals, and the oil is the Holy Spirit.

We sing a hymn that likens an individual to a vessel:

O! to be nothing, nothing,
 Only to lie at his feet,
 A broken and emptied vessel,
 For the Master's use made meet.

Emptied, that he might fill me,
 As forth to his service I go;
 Broken, that so unhindered,
 His life through me might flow.

What is the significance of an empty vessel? The old nature is to be emptied out so that as much as possible of the Holy Spirit can be received. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled.

When the Kingdom is set up, God will pour out His Spirit first on the sons and daughters of Israel and then on all flesh. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I [God] will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28). The spirit of contrition will be poured on Israel, and in that emptied condition, they will receive blessings (Zech. 12:10). From there, the blessings will go out to others. The Holy Remnant will be the only survivors in Israel, and Providence will also miraculously preserve Jews in other countries who are in the right heart condition to be part of the Holy Remnant. Subsequently, God will pour out His Spirit on the world of mankind.

There was a creditor in the type, for Elisha told the widow to sell the oil and pay the debt. The thought of a creditor also applies to the Kingdom Age. Jesus has paid the ransom price for the sin of Adam, but in addition, each individual has to make good in the next age in order to get life. Each person must pay to Justice whatever he owes for willful past sins. As he walks up the highway of holiness, he will have to retrace wrong steps previously taken.

In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, the King said to the righteous, the sheep class, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). The sheep will visit the sick, those in prison, etc., and get everlasting life. However, the self-centered goat class will not get life. Therefore, the oil being distributed to others is comparable to the Lord's commission to his Church in this age to "preach good tidings unto the meek; ... bind up the brokenhearted, ... proclaim liberty to the captives, ... [and] give unto them [that mourn in Zion] beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isa. 61:1,3). The oil was used primarily for medicinal purposes (as an unguent) and for food and light.

In the type, the woman collected the empty vessels, but they *came* to her house to be filled. And in the next age, "the Spirit and the bride [will] say, *Come*. And let him that heareth say, *Come*. And let him that is athirst *come*. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). The vessels represent people.

2 Kings 4:8 And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

Verses 8-37 pertain to the Shunammite woman, whose son Elisha restored to life. Shunem was near Mount Gilboa and the Mount of Transfiguration (Mount Tabor).

When Elisha went on a pilgrim trip or on some other purpose, he took the route through

Shunem. On a particular day, a “great woman” constrained him to partake of a meal, and henceforth whenever he passed through, he stopped there for a meal.

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

2 Kings 4:10 Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

Now she suggested to her husband that instead of just giving the prophet a meal, it would be nice to make a little room for this “holy man of God.” The chamber was like a private apartment with a bed, table, stool, and candlestick.

Comment: The room was plain, but it was adequate, having everything Elisha needed.

Reply: Yes, and the room was upstairs (“on the wall”), so it was private and thus good for meditation, prayer, and rest. This woman was indeed “great,” for she was given to hospitality, nobility, reverence for the Lord, generosity of heart, and good character.

2 Kings 4:11 And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

2 Kings 4:12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.

2 Kings 4:13 And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.

One day Elisha came to the room, lay on his bed, and said to Gehazi, his servant, “Call the Shunammite woman.” She came and stood before the prophet.

Gehazi spoke for Elisha, perhaps for purposes of decorum. Elisha wanted to do the woman a favor for her kindness to him, so his message was, “What would you like me to do for you? Shall I speak to the king for you or to the captain of the host?” She replied, “I dwell among my own people,” showing she was content with the status of her life and had all she needed along temporal lines.

Comment: Part of the greatness of this woman was her desire to please the Lord. She properly went to her husband with the suggestion to make a little chamber; that is, she did not usurp any of his authority. She made this suggestion for the Lord and not for any form of reward.

Reply: Yes, her greatness was in character.

Elisha’s offer to speak to the king suggests there was a certain rapport between them, probably as a result of the battle between Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the Edomites against the Moabites (2 Kings 3:4-27). Elisha’s prophecy had come to pass, for Israel was victorious. Now he felt that he could use this relationship to reward, or repay, the woman.

Moreover, if Elisha said a good word for the woman, the captain of the host could give her husband an honorable position, a stipend, or recognition in the court of the king, thus elevating their lifestyle to a higher level of court life. But she declined, knowing that such a life with

wealth, popularity, and status would not be conducive to holiness. She was quite content with her present environs. However, the woman did have a secret desire, which she did not mention, as Gehazi would reveal (verse 14).

Q: Elisha himself was a holy man of God, yet he offered the woman something that would have been to the detriment of her character. Wouldn't he have known in advance that she would refuse the offer?

A: Elisha probably made this offer spontaneously, without much forethought. He merely wanted to repay her hospitality in some way. As he was lying in his chamber, he thought about showing her a kindness. This picture is intimate, for in reading the account, we are brought into the household, as it were.

2 Kings 4:14 And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.

2 Kings 4:15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

2 Kings 4:16 And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

2 Kings 4:17 And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

The woman left the room, and then Elisha said to Gehazi, "What, then, is to be done for her?" The servant answered, "She has no child, and her husband is old." Elisha said, "Call her."

When the woman returned, Elisha said, "In nine months, you will have a son." Her response was, "Do not deceive me." (The word "lie" is too strong.) As prophesied, she conceived, and a son was born to her nine months later.

Comment: With the woman's husband being old, she probably felt that she could not ask for a child, that such a request would be an impossibility.

2 Kings 4:18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

2 Kings 4:19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.

2 Kings 4:20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

Verse 18 shows a time lapse, for the "child" had to be at least three or four years old to be sufficiently "grown" to go out to the field to his father and the reapers. When he complained, "My head, my head," his father, not realizing the seriousness of the ailment, instructed one of the young men to carry the child back to his mother's care. He sat on his mother's knees until noon and then died, possibly of a hemorrhage or sunstroke.

2 Kings 4:21 And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.

2 Kings 4:22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the

young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

2 Kings 4:23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him today? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.

2 Kings 4:24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.

The mother, the “great woman,” took the dead child upstairs to Elisha’s room, placed him on the bed, shut the door, and went out and called her husband (verse 8). She asked for one of the young men and one of the asses so that she could go in haste to the prophet and then return.

Notice that the woman did not tell her husband the boy had died. This omission shows that she had more faith than he did, and there was a basis for her faith. Apparently, she knew that Elijah, through the power of God, had restored a child to life by stretching himself three times on the child (that is, by giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation), and that Elisha was prophet in Elijah’s stead (1 Kings 17:17-24). Therefore, Elijah’s mantle of authority and spirit now rested on Elisha. Also, she may have heard about Elisha’s prophecy and the resulting victory for Israel and Judah in the battle against Moab. Thus Elisha had already acquired a reputation since crossing the Jordan River.

Comment: Since the miracle of her son’s birth had come through Elisha, it was logical for the mother to reason that any restoration to life would come through him too.

The woman’s husband did not understand her mission. He just knew that she wanted to go see Elisha on some matter, even though it was not a “new moon” or a “sabbath.” As requested, he furnished a young man (a servant) and an ass for her. The woman’s instruction to the young man was to drive the ass as fast as possible, slowing down only if she said to.

Q: What were the “new moon” and the “sabbath”?

A: These were special religious days in which the Jews went to the synagogue or to the school of the prophets, which probably had a meeting place for study and reading the Scriptures.

2 Kings 4:25 So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite:

2 Kings 4:26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.

The woman made haste to the prophet. From Mount Carmel, Elisha could see her coming afar off, so he sent Gehazi to intercept her and ask if all was well with her, her husband, and her child. (He suspected a dire circumstance.) Wanting to go direct to Elisha, she brushed off Gehazi with the reply, “It is well.” She did not want to be delayed by him.

2 Kings 4:27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.

2 Kings 4:28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

2 Kings 4:29 Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and

go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

2 Kings 4:30 And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

Previously there was decorum with the prophet, but now, being in a real emergency, the woman wanted to speak direct. When she got to Elisha, she prostrated herself, seized his feet, and began to implore him. Gehazi wanted to pull her away, but Elisha said to leave her alone, for her soul was vexed and God had not revealed the reason to him. When she said, "Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me'?" then Elisha knew the problem was with the son, but he did not know the son was dead.

Next Elisha sent Gehazi to the woman's house with the following instructions: "Take my staff and go immediately to the child. Do not talk to anyone on the way. When you get to the child, lay my staff upon his face to heal the malady."

Q: Would distractions have intruded upon the spirit that Elisha was imparting to his servant?

A: Yes. Also, the instruction to go direct and in haste showed Elisha's concern for the woman and the source of her distress. He wanted to help her.

However, the woman refused to leave unless Elisha himself accompanied her. Instead of turning around and getting on the ass and following Gehazi back to her home, she felt the situation required the prophet's presence. She did not have as much faith in the servant as she had in the prophet himself. Therefore, Elisha arose and followed her.

2 Kings 4:31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

Gehazi did not know in advance that the child had died. Thinking the child was mortally ill and in critical condition, Gehazi put Elisha's staff on his face, but the child did not revive. "There was neither voice, nor hearing." Gehazi went to meet Elisha with this report.

2 Kings 4:32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

2 Kings 4:33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD.

When Elisha arrived and saw that the child was dead and laid out on his bed, he shut the door so that he and the child were alone, and the prophet prayed to God.

2 Kings 4:34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

2 Kings 4:35 Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

Next Elisha gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, putting his mouth, eyes, and hands on the child's mouth, eyes, and hands, respectively, in very close communication. Not only was Elisha

trying to breathe air into the child, but the implication is that the child was both dead and *cold*. Hence the prophet was trying to warm him and to get the heart and circulation going and oxygen into the lungs.

As an example, if an adult sits in an upholstered or leather chair for a reasonable length of time and then gets up, another person who sits right down in that chair can feel the heat. Elisha was trying to restore the child by using his own body to warm the child's body. The prophet was having a little trouble, but he noticed that there was some improvement, for the child's flesh got warm. But Elisha sensed something else, namely, that he was now cold from lying on the cold body of the child. In other words, heat from Elisha had transferred to the child. Therefore, Elisha quickly walked to and fro in the house to stir up his own circulation. He was exercising to restore his own body warmth.

Then Elisha went up and again stretched himself upon the child. At that point, the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes; that is, he revived and was alive. The marginal reference in some Bibles is "gasped," which is probably more correct than "sneezed." The child gasped for air as oxygen went into his lungs and he came out of a coma. The progression was as follows. The child (1) was dead, (2) was made warm but was in a comatose state, (3) gasped seven times for air, and (4) became alive and fully conscious.

Comment: Obviously, this was the Lord's power, rather than just resuscitation on Elisha's part, for the child was truly dead.

Reply: Yes, but Elisha first prayed and did everything he could. The Lord rewarded his efforts with the child's coming to life.

Comment: There is a similarity between warmth leaving Elisha and virtue going out of Jesus when he healed others.

2 Kings 4:36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

2 Kings 4:37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

Next Elisha called Gehazi and told him to call the Shunammite woman. When she came, Elisha said, "Take up your son." Notice the decorum. She did not effusively stay there but fell at Elisha's feet and bowed to the ground, deeply genuflecting to thank him. She had intruded upon his service by detaining him, and he had come to the house and restored the child. Now, with much appreciation, she properly thanked the prophet, not overdoing the matter, and then took her son.

Q: When Elijah restored the son of the widow of Zarephath, he stretched himself on her son three times. Now Elisha effected a resuscitation with seven sneezes or gasps from the Shunammite's son. In the antitype, does Elijah, who represents the Church, picture the three 1,000-year days that lead into the Kingdom from Pentecost? And would the incident with Elisha indicate the gradual resuscitation during the seven periods of the Kingdom Age to bring one to a full standing, or upright condition?

A: In some respects, the numbers 3 and 7 are similar in either a negative or a positive sense. In a negative sense, the third time is crucial. For example, the third day with many medical problems is the crisis period that determines whether a person lives or dies. "Seven" will come up again in the next chapter with regard to Naaman the leper's washing in the Jordan River.

The seven times show *gradual* restoration during the Kingdom Age. The Lord will not immediately restore fallen humanity to perfect human nature. “In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be” (Eccl. 11:3). Barring certain other modifications, when the “tree” is restored, it will be very similar to what it was when it went into the grave. For instance, if a person’s body is blown to bits at death, it certainly has to be restored to a reasonable wholeness when he comes forth in the general resurrection in the Kingdom. Incidentally, we believe that both the Gospel Age and the Kingdom Age consist of seven periods of time. In summary then, the three times show a crucial period (the *climax*), and the seven times show a *process* before full restoration. This, of course, is a picture of the work of the Ancient Worthies.

Gehazi is prominent in some of these pictures, for he is mentioned sometimes by name and sometimes as a “servant” of Elisha. Actually, whether the assistant of Elisha was Gehazi or someone else is relatively immaterial. The point is that the Ancient Worthies will have assistants, and this association calls attention to another factor. Just as Elijah was accompanied by Elisha, so all during the Gospel Age there have been a Little Flock class and a Great Company class, even though the latter will not be recognized in a legalistic sense until the Church is complete and glorified. Then the Great Company will be dealt with in a specialized sense, and their call will be merely to get eternal life, as opposed to going into eternal death.

We have suggested on other occasions that just as there have been a Great Company class and a Little Flock class in the Gospel Age, so there will be an Ancient Worthy class and a Great Company class in the Kingdom Age. This thought is confirmed by the four classes of Levites around the Tabernacle, none of whom had an inheritance in the land: Little Flock, Great Company of the Gospel Age, Ancient Worthies, and Great Company of former ages. All four classes will get a spiritual change, but two of the classes are inferior (that is, secondary, or servant, classes). The Great Company class of the Gospel Age will be involved as messengers in making a communication between the spiritual and the earthly phases of the Kingdom. The other Great Company class will be on the earth with the Ancient Worthies. Only the matters that are too difficult for others to handle will be taken to the Ancient Worthies. Underneath them, others will be involved in carrying out some of the particulars.

2 Kings 4:38 And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before Elisha, he told his servant (probably Gehazi) to put on the great pot and seethe pottage for them. The antitypical setting is the Kingdom. A meal was about to be served, but later the sons of the prophets found that the pottage, or stew, had been poisoned.

2 Kings 4:39 And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not.

One of the sons of the prophets went out in the field to gather herbs and found a wild vine from which he gathered gourds. He shredded the gourds into the pot. The others did not know that the gourds were poisonous.

2 Kings 4:40 So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof.

2 Kings 4:41 But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out

for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

The stew was served. When the sons of the prophets tasted it, they realized it was poisonous and cried out to Elisha, “There is death in the pot.” What is the lesson or circumstance with regard to the Kingdom?

Comment: The restitution process will be progressive. Not all doctrinal error will be removed immediately.

Reply: That will be true not only of those in the tomb but also of those who live through the Time of Trouble. The message of truth will go out from Jerusalem to the various nations in the four quarters of the earth, but what about the poison that was introduced in the type?

Comment: The poison is erroneous doctrine.

Reply: Yes, and the antidote was wheat or corn “meal” (also a food); that is, truth was needed to counteract the wrong doctrine.

Comment: Since one of the sons of the prophets put the poisonous gourds in the pot, the implication is that even in Israel, the channel of truth will be through “Elisha”—the Ancient Worthies—not just an Israelite.

Reply: In other words, a son of the prophets mixed damaging doctrine into the pot, which presumably was pure originally.

Q: How did the other sons of the prophets know that the stew had been poisoned?

A: They could tell by the taste that poison was in the stew. They sensed that if they continued to eat, they would die or at least get very ill.

Q: Will this condition exist further on in the Kingdom Age?

A: We do not think so, for unlike Elijah’s experiences, the miracles do not seem to be in sequential order. The Pastor commented, without going into detail, that evil predominates in the present age (not meaning there is no good), and good will predominate in the next age (not meaning there will be no evil). False and wrong doctrines, thoughts, inclinations, and practices will have to be eliminated, but this will take time. As princes in different parts of the earth, the Ancient Worthies will be dealing with people in various stages of ignorance. Thus, as stated, restitution will be progressive. At the end of the Kingdom Age, “they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD” (Jer. 31:34). Therefore, in answer to the original question, the condition of poison in the stew will occur much earlier in the Kingdom Age. Not only will there be a progressive development of truth, but there will be regional imbalance too.

Comment: Zephaniah 3:9 reads, “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that [ultimately] they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”

2 Kings 4:42 And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.

2 Kings 4:43 And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said

again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.

2 Kings 4:44 So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the LORD.

Verses 42-44 are reminiscent of Jesus' multiplying the bread and the fish. When a man from Baal-shalisha brought Elisha 20 loaves of barley bread and ears of corn, Elisha told his servant to feed 100 people. The servant protested that the amount was not sufficient. Elisha said there would be enough bread and corn with some left over, and he was right. Although the miracle was on a far smaller scale than that of Jesus, the food multiplied, nevertheless.

Baal-shalisha, meaning "lord of the third ground (or earth)," is a reference to the third heavens and earth in the Kingdom Age. The lesson is that poverty, hunger, and disease will all be gradually and efficiently eliminated in the Kingdom.

Comment: Psalm 67:6 reads, "Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us." Psalm 85:12 and Ezekiel 34:27 use similar phraseology.

2 Kings 5:1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

Naaman was a Syrian general who was held in honor and esteem by the king. He was "a mighty man in valour," but these good qualities were offset to a large extent by the fact that he was a leper.

Notice the statement "by him [Naaman] the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria"; that is, God had paid particular attention to Naaman. Also, God may have permitted Naaman to get leprosy because He knew what the final result would be; namely, through Naaman, the Lord's power would be made manifest, and a lesson would be brought to us.

Comment: What beautiful timing! The fact God gave Naaman a victory over Israel means that Israel was ripe for punishment for disobedience.

Reply: Yes, the Lord times events like a master chess player.

2 Kings 5:2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

The Syrians had gone out in marauding bands and abducted, among others, a "little maid" from Israel. She now waited on Naaman's wife.

Comment: Again that was no accident!

2 Kings 5:3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

The *little* maid, who was *great* in faith, said to her mistress, Naaman's wife, "If only my lord [Naaman] were with the prophet in Samaria, his leprosy would be cured." Her statement was taken seriously, which speaks well for her.

Comment: Perhaps, too, the timing was propitious with Naaman's wife being despondent and

having just said, “Oh, if only my husband could get better!”

Reply: Yes, and the little maid had compassion for her. We can assume that the little maid was very well treated.

2 Kings 5:4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

Someone went in and told Naaman what the little maid had said about a certain prophet in the land of Israel and what he could do. Of course this account is summarized, so she may have enlarged on Elisha’s miracles.

2 Kings 5:5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

It may be that the king of Syria was present when the report came to Naaman about the prophet in Israel, for the king responded immediately and told Naaman, “Go *in haste*, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” Thus Naaman left for Israel and took with him 10 talents of silver, 6,000 pieces of gold, and 10 changes of raiment. That was quite a gift! For the king of Syria to send a letter requesting Naaman’s cure to another *head of state*, plus a substantial gift, shows he thought very highly of Naaman.

Q: Did Naaman have a specific kind of leprosy?

A: Yes, his leprosy was like a white scurf all over his body, for although it would be seen, it was not the contagious kind of leprosy that would have kept him from society (Lev. 13:12,13). Verse 27, the last verse of this chapter, tells that as punishment, Gehazi got the same kind of leprosy, and it was *white*. “The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.” In addition, King Uzziah probably got this same kind of leprosy for his disobedience in boldly going into the Temple to burn incense, and so did Miriam, Moses’ sister, and Simon the leper, the father of Judas Iscariot (2 Chron. 26:16-21; Num. 12:1-10; Matt. 26:6; Mark 14:3).

2 Kings 5:6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

2 Kings 5:7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

When the king of Israel read the letter of introduction that Naaman brought from the king of Syria requesting a cure of the leprosy, he was distraught. Lacking the faith of the little maid, he rent his clothes and thought the king of Syria was trying to start a quarrel—and thus have a pretext for attacking Israel. The king of Israel did not think it was possible for leprosy to be cured through Elisha. In fact, he did not even think of Elisha.

Under the Law, leprosy was considered a stigma from the Lord. The antitypical reason for leprosy all over the body as a white scurf not being as bad as other kinds of leprosy is that it represents the individual’s recognition that he is wholly a sinner. When leprosy was located in different limbs and parts of the body, it did not indicate a spirit of humility and contrition. And

we see later that Naaman did have a good spirit.

We can picture Naaman coming as a general with his chariot, servants, and bounty, which consisted of changes of garment and a chest of silver and gold. Then he presented the letter to the king of Israel. When the king read the contents and saw that the request was a cure for leprosy, he was astounded. A similar incident happened in the history of Egypt, where the king of the south wanted to have a war against the king of the north, so he deliberately made a request that was so ridiculous it could not be fulfilled. With the king of the south wanting a yes or a no, the king of the north realized the request was like a declaration of war, and it did result in warfare. So the king of Israel reacted somewhat the same way, thinking the inability to cure Naaman's leprosy would provoke the king of Syria to a battle. The king of Israel rent his clothes, so we can see that he took the matter to heart, saying, "Am I God," instead of thinking of the Prophet Elisha. "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me."

2 Kings 5:8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

2 Kings 5:9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

When Elisha heard that the king of Israel had publicly rent his clothes, he sent a message to the king, saying, "Let Naaman come to me so that he will know there is a prophet in Israel." (The little maid had said there was a prophet in Samaria, that is, in the ten-tribe kingdom, in Israel.) Therefore, Naaman and his horses, chariot, servants, and gifts went to the abode of Elisha and stood outside at a respectful distance in a waiting attitude.

Comment: No doubt Elisha's house was a *humble* dwelling, and outside was the *great* general with all that accompanied him. The scene would have attracted the attention of onlookers.

2 Kings 5:10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

Naaman, a man of honor, dignity, and great standing in his own country, waited for Elisha to come out to him and greet him with formal recognition. Instead Elisha sent a *servant* with the message "Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times, and your flesh will be clean again." Under the circumstance, this response seemed rather strange to those who were present.

Comment: Society today is similar. People love all the hoopla and are not interested in the simple truth because it is not sensational.

2 Kings 5:11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

2 Kings 5:12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

Naaman was angry because he felt that the least Elisha could do would be to show respect and decorum. When Elisha was not polite enough to come out and show his face, Naaman's dander was aroused. Moreover, Naaman expected Elisha to call on the name of Jehovah and wave his

hand over the leprosy and cure it (see RSV and NIV). Then the instruction, given through a servant, further angered Naaman, who said, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?” It was an insult to be told to wash in the Jordan, which was muddy, especially at this season, when Syria had clear, clean tributaries and streams. After all, he had made a long trip from Syria and was humbly asking for help before this little dwelling. He turned and went away in a rage. Incidentally, the Jordan was muddy because it cascaded down to great depths, bringing soil with it, so that in the vicinity of the prophet, there was quite an accumulation of silt and debris.

2 Kings 5:13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

The humble servants reasoned quietly with Naaman: “My father, if the prophet had asked you to do a great thing, wouldn’t you have done it, so why not follow his simple instructions?” In other words, “Give it a try.” The very fact the servants could reason with Naaman shows that he was approachable, which is another good trait.

Comment: The servants obviously loved Naaman to call him “father.”

Reply: Yes. It was just that the circumstance hit him the wrong way.

Sometimes people who do not have the education and the background say some startling things, and that was the case here. What reasonable advice the servants gave Naaman! The servants had also made the long trip from Syria, and they desired Naaman’s healing so that he could return with honor, victory, and success.

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

According to Elisha’s instructions, Naaman dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, and the leprosy disappeared. His flesh became like that “of a little child, and he was clean.”

Q: Are the seven times significant?

A: Yes, the seven times represent the seven stages of the Kingdom. People will not instantly become perfect in the Kingdom Age, for they will have to *walk up* the highway of holiness (Isa. 35:8). The walk will be a journey and a process.

Naaman was told to go to the Jordan, which is associated with baptism and consecration. Jesus was baptized in this river and there began his ministry. The clearer water in the rivers in Naaman’s home country had no bearing on the cure, for in the antitype, consecration will be required.

2 Kings 5:15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

2 Kings 5:16 But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

When Naaman returned this time, Elisha came out to him. Naaman reasoned with the prophet

and expressed his appreciation: “Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.” Then he urged Elisha to accept his gifts. However, Elisha steadfastly refused the gifts because consecration is not related to money. Forgiveness and repentance are not bought, so the gifts were completely uncalled for under this circumstance.

The seven times (verse 14) represent the seven stages of the Kingdom Age, and Naaman the Syrian pictures the saved world of mankind at the end of the Millennium. They will be thoroughly cleansed of their leprosy because of their obedience in receiving instruction.

Q: In the type, lepers had to show themselves to the priest for a pronouncement of clean or unclean. In the antitype of the Kingdom, will the people have to appear before “the priest”?

A: Other pictures show that the people will have to get instruction from the Ancient Worthies and attend certain religious festivals. During the Kingdom, each individual will undergo periods of inspection to see whether he has made sufficient progress. For example, if a person makes no progress after 100 years, he will be deemed worthy of death. And that is not the end of the matter, for all then living will have to go through the final test in the Little Season at the end of the Millennium. Those who are obedient in heart will successfully pass over into the age beyond the Millennium.

Comment: The cleansing of Naaman’s flesh ties in with Job 33:25, “His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth.”

Reply: That statement was uttered by Elihu, who represents the Great Company in the Gospel Age. Certainly this class has a sufficiency of knowledge concerning the Kingdom. However, although Elihu seemed to have *profound* wisdom, his reasoning was inferior to that of Job. His language was flowery, but his character was not as good as it superficially appeared to be. Accordingly, many of the Great Company will be well versed in truth as far as language and presentation are concerned, but they will lack the substance of the Job class, the Little Flock.

Comment: According to Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, the name Naaman means “pleasant,” which is appropriate for the saved world of mankind.

Reply: Yes. Not only was Naaman great and honorable, but he was “a mighty man of valour,” which is a quality the world would appreciate (verse 1). Apparently, he had a genuine, natural nobility of bearing.

Naaman’s returning to thank Elisha reminds us of the one leper out of ten who went back to thank Jesus for healing him (Luke 17:12-19). Naaman’s joy, decorum, and dignity are apparent. He could see that this humble man of God was superior to him—and that the God who operated through this prophet was the true God. Moreover, Elisha would not accept any gifts for the miracle that was done with the power *of God*.

2 Kings 5:17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules’ burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

Naaman requested that he be given two mules, each bearing a burden of earth, to take back to Syria so that he could kneel on it and pray to the God of Israel and offer burnt offerings and sacrifices to Him. The dirt from Israel would be loaded into two bags to hang on both sides of the saddle to balance each mule. Hence Naaman wanted to take four heavy bags of dirt back to Syria to make a plot in his homeland. This touching request manifested his down-to-earth humility. Of course Naaman was not denied his request.

2 Kings 5:18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

Naaman asked to be pardoned when he accompanied his master into the house of Rimmon to worship there. Evidently, the king was somewhat infirm and had to lean on Naaman's hand in order to bow down.

Comment: Naaman himself would not be worshipping in that place, so he would merely be showing deference in regard to his employment.

Reply: He was asking that this act not be considered religious homage to a false god but just a courtesy on behalf of the king.

2 Kings 5:19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.

Notice Elisha's answer. He simply said, "Go in peace," and did not state whether the deference would be right or wrong. However, in this particular circumstance, such assistance by Naaman would be overlooked. While he was contrite and recognized the God of Israel, that did not mean he had to forsake his occupation. Although he did not say, "I want to forsake my homeland and live here in Israel and serve God," he truly believed in God, but he felt that his duty was to return to his former employment, so he asked forgiveness in connection with acts he would be compelled to make.

Q: Does this incident with Naaman indicate that other gods will be worshipped in the Kingdom for a time?

A: No. Earlier Naaman said that he would use this earth to sacrifice unto God in his private worship. Of course, being in a foreign land, he would not be able to make offerings through the Aaronic priesthood. The principle was expressed by Paul in speaking of the Gentiles in Athens: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at" (Acts 17:30). As a Syrian and not an Israelite, Naaman was not under the strict regimen of the Law. He had originally come to Israel to be cured, not to worship.

2 Kings 5:20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.

2 Kings 5:21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?

2 Kings 5:22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

2 Kings 5:23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.

What a despicable thing Gehazi did! Not only was he greedy, but he lied. The Syrian had just left the presence of Elisha and gone only a short distance when Gehazi took two men and

pursued after him and told a complete falsehood. He said, “My master Elisha sent me to tell you that just as you left, these two young men came to him from Mount Ephraim.” The implication was that the two men were in need. Gehazi, who wanted the valuables for himself, said, “The gifts are not for me but for these two, and Elisha sent me on their behalf.” When Gehazi asked for “a talent of silver, and two changes of garments,” Naaman said, “Be content,” and gave Gehazi two talents of silver (twice as much) and two garment changes. As lavish as these gifts were, they were only a small portion of what Naaman had brought for Elisha (10 talents of silver, 6,000 gold pieces, and 10 changes of raiment). Therefore, Naaman may have had a measure of reserve with regard to giving these gifts, but nevertheless, he urged Gehazi to take two talents of silver for the two young men. By his actions, Gehazi degraded the office of servant and showed he did not have the spirit of reverence.

2 Kings 5:24 And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

When Gehazi got back, he took the silver and the garments from the two young men and put them in his own house. Of course they had heard Gehazi fabricate the story, and now he sent them on their way.

Comment: It is hard to understand how Gehazi could have been so dense. Time and again he had seen God reveal secret things to Elisha, yet he thought he could get away with this atrocious lie. Gehazi manifested an incorrigible character—like that of the fallen angels, who observe so much yet continue to sin.

Reply: This is true in any age. It was true with Israel in the past, it is true in the Gospel Age, and it will be true in the Kingdom Age. Such individuals are blind to the reality of the situation.

Q: Earlier Elisha had said, “As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none [of the gifts]. And he [Naaman] urged him to take it; but he refused” (verse 16). After Elisha expressed these strong sentiments, wouldn’t it seem strange to Naaman that Elisha would change his mind and send Gehazi after him?

A: The lie was told convincingly. Also, the two young men who witnessed the lie may have cooperated, thinking Gehazi would share the wealth with them, but that was not the case.

2 Kings 5:25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

Gehazi had already lied before Naaman and the two witnesses who were with him, and now he lied before Elisha. Why did the prophet ask him, “Whence comest thou, Gehazi?” Elisha was giving Gehazi an opportunity to repent, just as Jesus gave Judas an opportunity. But Gehazi lied again and said he went nowhere.

2 Kings 5:26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

Elisha knew all along what Gehazi was planning to do and that the motive was greed. “Went not mine heart with thee?” When Naaman stepped down from his chariot, that was the moment of crisis for Gehazi. Up until that point, it was just intent on Gehazi’s part, but when he lied, the sin was committed. Similarly, Judas had made arrangements for the betrayal of Jesus, but up until the last minute, he had an opportunity to change his mind. As soon as he went to the priests and accepted money, the contract was sealed, and it was further sealed with the

betrayal kiss in the Garden of Gethsemane. Therefore, he received double condemnation.

Elisha then asked, “Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?” These thoughts may have been dancing through Gehazi’s mind at that very time. He was thinking what he could do with the money.

2 Kings 5:27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

The punishment of leprosy was a condemnation that would carry right on through Gehazi’s seed. The kind of leprosy that Naaman had, which was an overall white scurf, would now cleave to Gehazi for the rest of his life—and the life of his seed.

Q: In a previous restitution miracle, Gehazi represented the Great Company class prior to the Gospel Age. Does this incident indicate that some in that class might not pass the final test in the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom Age because the honor will go to their heads?

A: Yes. Their trial will be a little different from that of the Ancient Worthies. Since the Ancient Worthies proved their faithfulness by their lifestyle in Old Testament days, thus manifesting their heart integrity, they will immediately receive a better resurrection when they come forth from the grave as regards mankind for a while. During the Kingdom Age, the Ancient Worthies will be under the New Covenant. Because they lived in primitive times, they may receive additional lessons and will need certain refinements of character and doctrine. Nevertheless, they have already proved their heart integrity and will get life. At the end of the Kingdom Age, when all the obedient of mankind have the same nature and perfection, the Ancient Worthies will be given a spirit nature. Thus they will get a better resurrection all the way through. Stated another way, when mankind catches up to the Ancient Worthies, the latter will receive the heavenly reward that Abraham looked for (Heb. 11:8-10,13-16).

When the servant class, the sons of the prophets, come forth in the resurrection, they will have another opportunity for life in the Kingdom Age. Not only were the sons of the prophets not of the priesthood, but even among the Levites, only Zadok’s line will have the honor in the Kingdom. The point is that on the one hand, some of the secondary class could fail to get life, for the Kingdom Age will be their time of judgment. On the other hand, the Ancient Worthies will all be faithful, for their integrity and heart condition were of such a high caliber that they have already been tested. With them, it is just a matter of getting a more complete education.

Comment: What joy there will be when Naaman, his wife, and the little maid come forth in the general resurrection!

Comment: The little maid was a Jew in a Gentile land, but she sent a Gentile back to Israel, knowing that a prophet there could perform a miracle.

Reply: We can surmise the little maid was subsequently given freedom by Naaman and the king of Syria so that she could return to Israel. The antitype seems to be that Jews who survive Jacob’s Trouble in Gentile lands will be sent back to Israel by every means of conveyance.

Q: Would the wrong principle with Gehazi be the same as that with Achan?

A: Yes.

Q: Antotypically speaking, why did Gehazi covet changes of raiment?

A: As an illustration, years ago a brother cultivated a prison ministry that occupied much of his time and thus curtailed his fellowship. Another brother spoke to him in front of others about leaving that ministry, saying it was being done under nominalism, for he was serving under a Protestant denomination. The brother with the prison ministry replied that he could not leave his vestments. He liked the fact that he entered the prison and dressed like a minister. He chose not to heed the advice he was given, and he was not seen in fellowship after that. Thus the prestige, office, and honor associated with being a “minister” became a snare. Similarly, some like to be known as a professor or a doctor. An academic degree can be an asset under certain circumstances, but with the Lord’s people, it is more apt to be a problem. Wealth, office, education, etc., can be a temptation and a danger to the consecrated. Another individual could not leave the Society—he just could not break the fellowship—even though he admitted, with tears rolling down his face, that it was completely in error. Some people do not have the strength to make certain decisions. The entire Kingdom Age will be needed to bring mankind up to where Adam was before he sinned and to prove their worthiness to enter the next age.

2 Kings 6:1 And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.

2 Kings 6:2 Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.

The sons of the prophets told Elisha, “Behold, the place where we dwell is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan River and each take a beam and make a dwelling place there.” Elisha said, “Go.”

Evidently, there were different schools (or communes) of the prophets, such as at Bethel and Jericho. Normally speaking, each school consisted of a group of 50. Earlier we read that Obadiah hid 100 of the Lord’s prophets in a cave in multiples of 50 (1 Kings 18:3,4). Now a group of the sons of the prophets wanted to have a dwelling place near the river Jordan.

2 Kings 6:3 And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

These sons of the prophets did not want to go and build a commune without Elisha. Hence they entreated him to accompany them, and he agreed.

2 Kings 6:4 So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.

Elisha and the sons of the prophets went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. The labor of felling the trees and trimming them to make beams for logs was shared. Since they were building a wooden structure, the lumber needed to fit snugly. At that time in history, trees were plentiful in the Jordan area, which was sometimes called “the jungle of Jordan,” and wild animals such as lions and bears were there.

2 Kings 6:5 But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

As one of the sons of the prophets was cutting down a tree, the iron axe head (see King James margin) flew off into the river. It is not too unusual in chopping wood for the head to get loose. A special type of nail that was sort of wedge-shaped and pointed was hammered in at the end of the axe handle to widen the head after it was fitted into the slot. Thus the axe head was wedged in very tightly, but in the course of time, it loosened. In this case, the axe head traveled

far enough to splash into the water and sink to the bottom of the river. Being very concerned, the individual who was using the axe cried out to Elisha, the miracle man, "Alas, master! for it was borrowed." An axe head was a precious item in those days.

2 Kings 6:6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.

2 Kings 6:7 Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

When Elisha was shown where the axe head had sunk into the water, he "cut down a stick" and cast it into the river, and "the iron did swim"; that is, it floated. Of course this was a miracle. The "stick" was the straight, or single, portion of a tree that did not have a lot of branches protruding. What would this miracle signify?

Comment: The iron, being a symbol of inflexibility, represented justice.

Reply: Yes. What are some pictures that show iron represents justice?

Comment: The legs of iron in the Book of Daniel represented the divided Holy Roman Empire. Rome had an inflexible codified law and system of justice. Also, in one of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, a tree was cut down, and two bands, one of iron and the other of brass, were put around the stump. The iron band signified justice. In still another picture, the fourth beast had "great iron teeth" (Dan. 7:7).

Comment: In the Kingdom, Jesus will rule with a rod of iron.

Reply: Yes, the rod-of-iron rule will have inflexibility and justice. Also, John the Baptist said to the insincere who came to him to be baptized, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees [to the trunk]," the implication being that a judgment would be visited upon the nation of Israel. He announced that a baptism of "fire" was coming (Matt. 3:10-12).

Thus the iron axe head was a symbol of justice, but we notice the following. When the axe head fell into the water, the law of *gravity* caused it to sink. But when the stick of wood was cast into the water, *antigravity* caused the iron axe head to float; that is, a *compensating force* lifted the iron. *Justice* condemned, so the iron fell into the Jordan River, which pictures *death*. Just as *condemnation* came upon Adam, the *head* of the human race, so the axe *head* fell into the Jordan (death) in an act of *judgment*. "In Adam all die, ... [but] in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). Jesus paid the Ransom, or corresponding (Greek *antilutron*) price (1 Tim. 2:5,6). The corresponding price compensated for the gravity; that is, it became the antigravity, causing the iron (justice) to float. Thus justice was *balanced*, and the person in the type was told to reach out his hand and retrieve the iron axe head, thereby taking (or securing) the Ransom to himself. Elisha said, "Take it up to thee." And the individual "put out his hand, and took it."

This general lesson shows the miracle of the resurrection in the Kingdom. The wooden stick, the tree, represents the Cross of Christ. Not only does the Hebrew word *ets* (rendered "stick") mean "tree," but Jesus was crucified on a "tree." He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. 2:24). The "tree" was wood, and the wood was in the form of a cross, for "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).

And there is another point; namely, someone had to be secured from the wood of that area. Among the sons born of men, one had to be selected to perform this miracle, and so Jesus was born of woman, of the human family. He was born of the Heavenly Father but also of woman,

and thus was identified with the human race. His selection as the Messiah implied his death.

The Jordan River (water) symbolized death; that is, it resembled a tomb. Adam, the antitypical axe head, died and was in the tomb. In due time, Jesus died on the Cross to offset Adam's penalty.

Q: What is the relationship between the place being too small and Jesus' dying on the Cross? A comment in a previous study said the type showed that a reconstruction program would be going on in the Kingdom.

A: Isaiah 49:20 reads, "The children ... shall say ... [in the Kingdom], The place [land of Israel] is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell." As time goes on in the Kingdom Age, Gilead will be inhabited. The people will pour into that enlarged area because Israel proper (that is, on the west side of the Jordan River) will be too small to accommodate the Jews.

Q: With Elisha picturing the Ancient Worthies, what does this miracle indicate with regard to their work in the Kingdom? Is restitution work being shown?

A: Yes. As a result of Jesus' death in the beginning of the Gospel Age, the general resurrection will take place in the Kingdom Age. The fact that the iron *floated* shows mankind will come out of the tomb. The axe head floated because the wooden stick was cast into the water. Jesus said, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40).

Q: In the antitype, do the two parts of the account indicate that to get life in the Kingdom Age, one will have to not only recognize Jesus as the Messiah but also participate in rehabilitating the earth and helping his fellow man, as shown in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats?

A: Yes, the Kingdom Age will be a reconstruction era, with an emphasis on *sharing* (verse 2). It will be a cooperative effort. The sons of the prophets will set the example in providing abodes for others. Incidentally, in performing these miracles, Elisha probably got instructions in his inner ear.

Comment: In the earlier study, the sons of the prophets were defined as Israelites and those who become Israelites under the New Covenant. This definition expands the term to include those in the right heart condition who will come into harmony with the Lord.

Reply: Those who get life (the sheep class) will have that willing and helpful disposition.

Q: Is there any correlation between this tree, which Elisha cast into the waters of the Jordan River, and the tree that Moses cast into the bitter waters of Marah to sweeten them in Exodus 15:23-26?

A: The two types are similar in principle, but the lessons and perspectives are different. The tree Elisha cast into the waters pertains to resurrection, whereas the casting in of the other tree pictures a cleansing, or purifying, of the waters, making them palatable for life. Water is a necessity of life, so we cannot stay in a place where all the water is poisonous.

We do not believe the Kingdom will have city dwellings of the type that exist today. If every man is to sit under his own vine and fig tree, a decentralization will take place to disperse the people so that they have clean air to breathe and can grow their own food. At that time, the Lord will give "rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit" (Lev. 26:4; Ezek. 34:27). When the curse is rolled back, the earth will

be very responsive, whereas part of the penalty on Adam when he was expelled from the garden is that the land bore thorns and thistles and man had to live by the sweat of his brow (Gen. 3:18,19). Each person will have to do some work and not just sit back and let others labor.

2 Kings 6:8 Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

The king of Syria, a traditional enemy of Israel, set up a camp for marauding bands to ambush the Israelites. Today this type of fighting is called guerrilla warfare, and it is almost impossible to completely stop in certain types of terrain, even with organized armies. Surprise sorties on unsuspecting victims are very effective.

The king of Syria wanted to have his camp at a particular place because it was convenient for making a sudden thrust into Israel to get goods and booty. Like the Vikings of old, his servants went out in little bands to seize plunder, which they brought back and shared with the main body of men. Syria quite frequently utilized this type of warfare, as well as campaigns.

2 Kings 6:9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

2 Kings 6:10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

Through divine instruction, Elisha forewarned the king of Israel of the king of Syria's purpose and place. Elisha issued the warnings several times, for the king of Israel "saved himself there, not [just] once nor twice."

2 Kings 6:11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?

The king of Syria knew that something was wrong, for he had given the secret information to only a very few of his servants. He could tell by the reaction of the Israelites that they were aware of his whereabouts. Knowing there was a leak somewhere, he thought that one of his own men was passing information to the king of Israel. Therefore, he asked, "Which one of you is a traitor giving confidential information to the enemy?"

2 Kings 6:12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

One of the servants told the king of Syria that Elisha was responsible for communicating the secret information to the king of Israel. (This fact tells us that the Syrians had spies who knew what Elisha was doing.) Every time the Syrians set a trap, the Israelites escaped because Elisha forewarned them.

2 Kings 6:13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

2 Kings 6:14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

Then the king of Syria wanted to know where Elisha was. When he found out that the prophet was in Dothan, he sent horses, chariots, and "a great host" to that hamlet, or small town, and

surrounded it by night to capture *one* man. The frustrated king of Syria was determined that Elisha would not escape by any means.

Comment: The king of Syria's efforts are rather humorous in retrospect. If Elisha knew what evil deeds the king of Syria was planning before, then of course he would be informed this time too.

2 Kings 6:15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

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

When Elisha's servant saw the great host besieging the city, he was apprehensive and said to the prophet, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" But Elisha replied, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Once again the circumstances were somewhat humorous. Elisha, his servant, and perhaps a few others were in a *little* hamlet with a *great* host surrounding it, yet Elisha said in effect that the enemy was *outnumbered*. Of course the prophet could make this statement because he knew that an *unseen* protective host of guardian angels was helping him and preserving the Lord's interests in the earth.

2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Elisha prayed that his young servant's eyes would be opened to see the invisible angels. The prayer was answered, and what did the servant see? "Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

The Syrian host was evidently enough removed, yet was very visible surrounding the whole city, or hamlet, of Dothan. But within that outer circle of the enemy host—that is, inside the circle—was another big host, which was closer to Elisha. In other words, the enemy host was around Dothan, but a buffer zone of angels surrounded Elisha. The mention of a "mountain" means that the terrain was hilly.

Q: If the "mountain" was full of horses and chariots of fire, wouldn't the angelic protection have been outside the Syrian host?

A: The Syrian horses and chariots could not go up on the mountains, so they surrounded the city of Dothan at a lower level to make sure Elisha would not escape. Elisha and his servant could see the enemy in the outer perimeter in the valley, that is, in areas where chariots could travel. The Israelites were known to dwell on the hills, whereas the armies of the Philistines, the Midianites, and other enemies were in the valleys.

Q: Please explain once more the relationship of Elisha to the angelic and Syrian hosts. If the *mountain* was full of the horses and chariots of fire around Elisha, weren't they *outside* the Syrians, on the *farthest* perimeter, but their huge size made them seem close to Elisha?

A: The first thing to realize is that Elisha was on a hill himself in Dothan. Similarly, many ancient towns in Israel were on hilltops. The hills were terraced for the people's dwellings and for protective purposes. Even their olive vineyards were on terraced ground. However, the hills were not so continuous that they could not be surrounded by the enemy, which came in

from a lower level. The enemy came in with the purpose of putting Dothan under siege, but the angels were *closer* to Elisha, being up on the surrounding hills. The word “mountain” does not necessarily mean one mountain or one hillock, for the land was very uneven with lots of gullies. Thus Elisha’s servant got the impression that the angels were closer to the prophet, that they were surrounding *him*, rather than the town.

Nothing can be definitely proven, so we are giving our thinking. The main lesson is that those who were with Elisha were more numerous than the enemy Syrian host, which could be seen with the *natural* eye. (The guardian angels could be seen only with *spiritual* vision.) With the enemy being below in the valley, the sensation was that the Syrians were in danger. Also, *spiritual* chariots did not need to travel in the valley.

Q: Why were the chariots described as being “of fire”?

A: The description “chariots of fire” indicated the *superiority* of the spiritual chariots. They were mightier and more awesome than the literal chariots of the Syrians.

2 Kings 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

2 Kings 6:19 And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

When the Syrian enemy host came to Elisha, they did not recognize him, but what was the “blindness” with which they were smitten? Elisha prayed that the enemy would be smitten with the *blindness of perception*. The men were not literally blind, for they could see to follow Elisha. Therefore, the thought is that they were mentally befogged. Being without common sense, they were like lambs going to the slaughter. Elisha walked ahead, and they followed, completely oblivious to what was happening. They thought they were being led to Elisha.

2 Kings 6:20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

2 Kings 6:21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?

Elisha led the enemy into Samaria, *the capital*, the command quarters of northern Israel. When the host got there, Elisha prayed that their eyes would be opened, and they realized they were in Samaria.

Seeing the enemy host coming with Elisha in front, the king asked the prophet, “My father, shall I smite them?” This was a very strange sight indeed, for the *armed* enemy *docilely and meekly followed* Elisha. By addressing Elisha as “My father” under this circumstance, the king showed respect, for Elisha was the chief prophet in Israel at that time.

Although the enemy host now saw they were in Samaria, they were still foggy. A spirit of dumbness had been cast over their minds so that they could see but not reason or comprehend properly.

2 Kings 6:22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them,

that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

2 Kings 6:23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

To the king of Israel's question, Elisha replied, "Do not smite the enemy host. Give them bread to eat and water to drink, and send them back to the king of Syria." When the enemy host returned to their homeland and related what had happened, the king of Syria discontinued sending marauding bands into Israel. However, prepared armed warfare did not stop—just the sorties that were sent out to raid Israel.

Q: Here the blindness of perception was used for a good purpose, but isn't this account a clue as to how Satan has had a blinding influence over the minds of men? "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4). People are not able to perceive certain things unless the Holy Spirit penetrates the "veil" (Isa. 25:7).

A: Yes. It is a *miracle* for one to see the truth. The lower the condition one is in when truth penetrates—the greater the contrast—the more miraculous the enlightenment seems to be. When a person who has been in a deep, dark mine for a long time comes out into the daylight, he is more sensitive to the contrast of his former condition. Some minds that are *brilliant* along secular lines such as science and education are *ignorant* on Bible subjects. An example would be scientists who discount creation and attribute millions of years to evolution. With regard to things of the Lord, Satan has cast darkness lest people see the light of the glory of the gospel of Jesus. If Satan extends darkness in areas where he does not want man to perceive the truth, that darkness is very real. As time goes on, we should not forget the power of the Holy Spirit that removed our blindness, for otherwise, we would start to judge and demean others because they cannot see points of truth. Bro. Krebs used to say, "The miracle is not how others cannot see but how we can see."

Q: Was the blindness in this account a form of hypnosis?

A: It was mesmerism of some kind. Hypnosis usually requires the cooperation of the subject, whereas mesmerism can create a hypnotic effect without such cooperation but through the use of an instrument—for example, a moving or swinging pendant—that focuses the concentration of the individual and allows spoken words to penetrate.

Comment: The term "mass hypnosis" has been applied to large groups of people who have seen UFOs. The effect seems to be similar to Elisha's control over the enemy host.

Reply: Satan can blind men's minds through television, indoctrination in schools and colleges, advertising techniques, and enticements of various kinds.

In regard to a spiritual lesson or antitype, we will make the following suggestions. The Scriptures indicate that some people in the Kingdom will not go up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. Zechariah 14:17-19 specifically mentions Egypt: "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." In other words, certain Egyptians—not the entire nation—will be reluctant to go to Jerusalem, the capital of

God's Kingdom, to pay obeisance to Israel, namely, Islamic fundamentalists. Because of their disobedience, sanctions will be applied to curb them and bring them into line, one sanction being no rain.

After the Kingdom is established, anyone with the evil intent of doing harm to Israel will be utterly frustrated, just as the Syrian enemy host was prevented from harming Elisha. Instead the latter were led like lambs right into Samaria, the capital, and given a feast. Thus a portion of Egypt will continue to have enmity toward Israel, but we do not know in advance what form that enmity will take. There is even the possibility of an organized effort to work injury, but any such effort will be stopped.

Comment: The restitution class will require much education and retraining. The frustration of evil purposes will be one means of education.

Reply: The lesson with the Syrians being led into Samaria is an illustration of the principle of education being used to frustrate what some intend to do. If the evil is duplicated, the frustration will happen again as a form of getting through to the perpetrators with reason. It is difficult to change the mind of someone who is indoctrinated on a matter, whether that person is in or out of the Bible Student movement. To see the truth is like a miracle, and the Lord can straighten out such matters very easily if He is inclined to do so.

Comment: With "great provision" being made for the Syrian host, the indication is that people in the Kingdom will be given every opportunity to come into harmony with God's ways.

Reply: It is impressive that the Israelites did not slay their enemy but gave an abundance of bread and water so that all the Syrians received sustenance. The local populace of Samaria had to stretch themselves and sacrifice to accommodate this large host. Also, the king of Israel properly asked for guidance and instruction as to what to do. Elisha, picturing the Ancient Worthies, told how to handle the matter and not harm the Syrians.

Comment: This servant seemed to be new, since Gehazi had proven unfaithful (2 Kings 6:15-17). Elisha kindly prayed that this servant would be given a faith-strengthening experience.

Reply: However, Gehazi was kept in service, for he pictures a Second Death (Abihu) class that continues to serve God and is ostensibly faithful in the eyes of many onlookers. As proof that Gehazi continued to be a servant, he is mentioned in 2 Kings 8:4,5.

2 Kings 6:24 And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.

The king of Syria besieged Samaria with all his host.

2 Kings 6:25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.

The siege caused a great famine in Samaria. The siege got so severe that an ass's head, which contained so *little* meat that it was not good for much except soup, was sold for a lot of money. A scoop of pigeon's dung, which would be used for fuel, was also expensive. In other words, food was scarce and costly, and so was the fuel used to do the cooking.

Q: Would this siege have taken place a while after the Syrian guerrilla bands were struck with blindness by Elisha and led into Samaria? Surely Syria would not have had the audacity to

besiege Israel right away.

A: Yes. The time was relatively short, but at least a year passed in the meantime. Previously the Syrian bands attacked for purposes of plunder. The warfare ceased when they saw the generosity that was extended to them by the king of Israel at the advice of Elisha.

2 Kings 6:26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.

2 Kings 6:27 And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?

2 Kings 6:28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.

2 Kings 6:29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

2 Kings 6:30 And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.

The king of Israel (Jehoram) mourned the circumstances which had brought about such *dire hunger* that two women had agreed to eat their sons. A dispute arose because after they boiled the first son and ate him, the other woman hid her son. Her refusal caused a dispute. Imagine being reduced to such an extremity that a mother cooked and ate her own child!

Comment: The dire extremity was predicted by Moses in Leviticus 26:29, and it occurred again in AD 69-70. The great Time of Trouble will be even worse.

2 Kings 6:31 Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

2 Kings 6:32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?

2 Kings 6:33 And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?

King Jehoram made a public oath regarding what he would do to Elisha. All the prophet did was to predict the circumstance that would transpire. Now, instead of recognizing Elisha as a true prophet, the king held him responsible.

Comment: We are reminded of what King Ahab said to Elijah: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" (1 Kings 18:17).

As the king's messenger was en route, Elisha said to the elders who sat in his house, "See ye how this son [Jehoram] of a murderer [Ahab] hath sent to take away mine head?" In other words, not only were Ahab and Jezebel evil, but also their seed.

Q: Which king of Israel said to Elisha earlier (2 Kings 6:21), "My father, shall I smite them?"

A: That was this same King Jehoram. He was fickle. Earlier he submissively sought and followed Elisha's advice in regard to feeding the Syrian guerrilla bands that the prophet had led into Samaria.

Q: What is the meaning of Elisha's question "Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?"

A: The king was coming; he was right behind his messenger.

It is difficult to tell who was speaking in verse 33: "Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?" Was the speaker Elisha, the king of Israel, or the king's messenger? (1) If Elisha was the speaker, he was saying, "This evil is permitted of the LORD." However, the meaning of the rest of the statement is not clear. (2) If the king was the speaker, he was blaming God. (3) The literal Hebrew seems to indicate that the messenger was speaking (see RSV footnote). The meaning may be straightened out as we proceed.

Comment: This chapter break is odd. Chapter 7 should have started with verse 24 of chapter 6, for the narrative continues.

2 Kings 7:1 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

2 Kings 7:2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

Elisha prophesied that a reversal of circumstances would take place the next day. Previously a lot of money was paid for an ass's head and for a scoop of dung, which were relatively nothing (2 Kings 6:25). But now food would be plentiful. A heaping measure of fine flour and two heaping measures of barley would be purchased for a shekel; hence a large quantity would be purchased for a small amount of money. The contrast with the scarcity of food that had just existed would be startling.

We can see the mettle of the character of the "lord on whose hand the king [of Israel] leaned" because he was incredulous. "Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" In other words, "Such a thing would be impossible. Even if food dropped out of the sky, there would not be enough for all of us." Because of his unbelief, Elisha prophesied that the king's lord would see the reversal but would not eat of it.

Comment: Probably the "lord" reflected the king's thinking as well as his own.

2 Kings 7:3 And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

2 Kings 7:4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

2 Kings 7:5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there.

2 Kings 7:6 For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a

noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.

2 Kings 7:7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

2 Kings 7:8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.

2 Kings 7:9 Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

2 Kings 7:10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.

2 Kings 7:11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.

Four leprous men at the Samaria city gate said, "We will die if we enter the city, for famine is there. And we will die if we stay here. Let us go to the enemy, and perhaps the Syrians will save us. If they kill us, we would die anyway." This was good reasoning.

When they entered the Syrian camp at twilight, it was empty. The enemy host was not there, for God had caused them to hear the noise of chariots, and they had fled in fear and panic, leaving behind food, animals, armaments, clothes, and possessions. The king of Syria thought the king of Israel had hired Hittites and Egyptians against the Syrian host.

Comment: Here is another sample of the type of miraculous deliverance that can occur in Jacob's Trouble, namely, hearing noises of imaginary enemies.

Reply: Yes, the Syrians were ready to annihilate the Israelites, but at twilight, when visibility was poor, they heard the sound of chariots, horses, and a great host, which caused them to panic. As a result, they turned and fled.

Comment: The Syrians carried a lot of goods with them.

Reply: Yes, they brought large quantities of food, a depot of supplies. Because they intended to besiege the Israelites, they had to be prepared for a long time.

The lepers ate and drank and took clothing, silver, and gold and hid them. Then their consciences began to bother them, and they said, "If we do not tell the good tidings to the king's household, mischief will befall us." Sensing that something eerie was happening, they felt they had to be careful. Therefore, they went outside the city of Samaria and, being lepers, called from a distance to the porters, or guards. (Lepers were not allowed to approach too close to the quarters of a city.) They wanted to get word to the king of Israel.

Comment: It is amazing that even horses and asses were still in the Syrian camp.

Reply: Awakened abruptly from sleep, the enemy had fled in sheer panic and confusion, thinking it was better to save their lives than to have horses, food, clothing, or money. The

situation reminds us of the Midianites when Gideon and the 300 surprised them in darkness. The Midianites thought that a large host had surrounded them, for Gideon had strategically positioned around the camp three bands consisting of 100 men each. Suddenly the 300 broke their vessels in concert, making a terrific noise and letting 300 lights shine forth. In each case, a similar technique was used. With Gideon, God's instructions to man were followed, whereas here God caused the Syrians to hear noise and their imaginations took over.

Comment: Apparently, the animals did not hear the noise of the imaginary enemy, for otherwise, they would have fled too.

Reply: Yes. Other incidents also show that both sight and hearing can be selectively permitted or withheld according to the Lord's purpose. The fact that the animals were standing quietly suggests they had not heard what reached human ears.

2 Kings 7:12 And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

2 Kings 7:13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.

2 Kings 7:14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.

The king of Israel did not believe the lepers' report but thought it was a trap, a plot to ambush the Israelites. This conclusion would be a normal reaction for one who did not believe Elisha's prediction, and of course the prophet had not said how the food would be obtained.

It was night when the king heard the report from the lepers. Since the lepers had entered the deserted Syrian camp at twilight, they had eaten and hidden gold and silver at night. Now, in the same night, they took word back to the city of Samaria. How spooky it must have been for the lepers to find empty tent after empty tent *in the dark* as they took the spoils!

Here again, as had already happened several times in the accounts of 1 and 2 Kings, a good suggestion was made by a lesser person. For example, a little maid suggested that Naaman, the Syrian general, go to Israel to be cured of his leprosy by Elisha. Here one of the king's servants said, "Why don't we take five of our remaining horses and find out if the lepers' story is true." The king consented to this common-sense suggestion to investigate the Syrian camp and make sure it was not a trap.

2 Kings 7:15 And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king.

2 Kings 7:16 And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

The food, which had figuratively rained from heaven, was now so plentiful that it could be bought inexpensively, as Elisha had prophesied. When the advance guard of the Israelites saw

the sleeping quarters with everything left behind, it was obvious that the Syrians had fled in haste and that the scene was not a trap. Even swords and armaments were left, in addition to clothing. Depending on the guards to alert them if trouble was approaching, the Syrians had characteristically divested themselves of unnecessary armor in order to sleep comfortably. Of course under a normal alert, the Syrians would have dressed quickly, but when they heard the sound of horses and the thumping of their hooves, they left in haste without their armor and just wearing undergarments.

“And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels.” As the Israelites pursued after the Syrians to the Jordan River, they saw garments and cooking vessels strewn about. Here was proof that there was no danger of a Syrian ambush. Then the Israelites “spoiled the tents of the Syrians,” collecting what they needed for themselves and their families. Incidentally, Samaria was about 20 miles from the Jordan.

2 Kings 7:17 And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

2 Kings 7:18 And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria:

2 Kings 7:19 And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

2 Kings 7:20 And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

When the king’s messenger, or lord, on whose hand the king leaned did not believe Elisha’s prophecy of reversal and plenty, the prophet, in turn, predicted the messenger’s death, saying, “Behold, thou shalt see it [the reversal] with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof” (2 Kings 7:2). The prophecy was fulfilled when the lord stood in the gate and was trampled by the people rushing to the spoils.

2 Kings 8:1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.

2 Kings 8:2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

2 Kings 8:3 And it came to pass at the seven years’ end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.

2 Kings 8:4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.

2 Kings 8:5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

2 Kings 8:6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

Comment: Jehoram, the king of Israel, was changeable. One minute he favored Elisha, and the next minute, he wanted him dead.

Reply: That was true of others as well—like Saul—who had a back-and-forth temperament.

Comment: Gehazi was on the scene here, i.e., after getting leprosy for deceit and disobedience.

Reply: Having the noncontagious kind of leprosy where his whole body was white, as described under the Law, he could have contact with society. Naaman and Gehazi both had this type of leprosy, and both remained in service.

Comment: Gehazi was not a trustworthy servant, yet he was still in service.

Reply: He represents those who go into Second Death but do not necessarily perish right away. Such individuals may even remain in fellowship. Therefore, one always has to look for cleansing and renewal and try to stay in the circle of God's fellowship and under the cloud of His mercy.

Providentially, here is another perfectly timed circumstance in Scripture. This incident involved the Shunammite woman. The king of Israel was talking to Gehazi, who was visiting him at this time on an errand. The king was saying, "While we have a moment, tell me the great things that Elisha, your master, has done. I have heard some things, but I would like to hear a review from you." Therefore, Gehazi was recounting how, through Elisha's exercise of faith, the Shunammite woman's son had been restored from death to life.

While the account in 2 Kings 4 provides much information, this later account in 2 Kings 8 tells that after that experience, Elisha had advised the woman to go elsewhere because a seven-year famine was coming. Now, at the end of the seven years, the woman returned from the land of the Philistines and went to the king to request the restoration of her house and property. At that very time, Gehazi was speaking with the king. To repeat, as *Gehazi was telling the king about the Shunammite's son being raised to life*, the woman arrived and cried for her house and land. Moreover, the woman's return after seven years was probably timed to be the very year of release under the Law. Thus the king not only felt the responsibility of returning her land but also sensed the providential circumstance of her appeal. He wanted to be her benefactor. (Sometimes people respond favorably to a situation, even though they do not have the best character.) Accordingly, the king dispatched an officer with authority to make sure "all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she [had] left the land, even until now" would be restored to her. The Shunammite woman was to get back not only her property but also whatever food remained in storage. The "fruits" could even have included animals.

Q: Is there a tie-in with the boy who sneezed seven times when Elisha revived him?

A: We have already discussed the antitype of that incident. In review, it shows that the work of the Kingdom will be progressive and gradual. As people walk up the highway of holiness, they will be walking from death to life, but they will not really be alive until they have been tried at the end of the Kingdom and passed the test. Meanwhile, there will be no more thence an infant of days, for when infants come forth from the tomb, they will have an opportunity to live 100 years. At that time, a review of their record will show whether or not they should continue to

have life. Even adults who come forth from the tomb will have a 100-year opportunity if they bow the knee and confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. In old age, some worldly people say, "If only I had my life to live over again, I would do things differently." That opportunity will be afforded in the Kingdom.

Before proceeding further in 2 Kings, we will review the anointings that God instructed Elijah to perform in 1 Kings 19:15-17.

Anointings and Slayings of Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha Plus Micaiah, Hazael, and Jehu as Types

This subject is complicated, and one reason is that there are two Jehoshaphats, two Jehorams, and two Ahaziah. One Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah, and the other Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehu. There was a King Jehoram and a King Ahaziah in both Israel and Judah. The duplication may have been providential to purposely confuse the picture until the due time for understanding the antitype. Very few readers would take the time to carefully examine the account to see which individual was being referred to with each mention. Thus the type would not be seen clearly, let alone the antitype.

Another problem is the sequence of the anointings. In 1 Kings 19:15,16, the order is stated as follows. "And the LORD said unto him [Elijah], Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, [1] anoint *Hazael* to be king over Syria: And [2] *Jehu* the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and [3] *Elisha* the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." Thus the anointing sequence in the type was Hazael to be king over Syria, Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in Elijah's stead.

Elijah was told to do the anointings when he got to Damascus. However, on the way to that destination, he encountered Elisha, and he never directly anointed either Hazael or Jehu because he was translated before he got to Damascus (1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:11). Not until 2 Kings 8:7-15 was Hazael anointed, and Jehu was anointed in 2 Kings 9:1-10. Nevertheless, after Jehu was anointed by a son of the prophets and some of the subsequent bloodbath had taken place, including the death of Jezebel, he said, "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" (2 Kings 9:36,37). In other words, even though Elijah was off the scene, Jehu accredited him with the prophecy regarding Jezebel.

Thus Elijah was instructed to do three anointings, but from the natural standpoint, he did only *one* anointing, namely, *Elisha*. That anointing occurred when Elijah was being translated, and his cloak, or mantle of authority, fell to the ground. Elisha picked up the mantle and became the prophet in Elijah's stead (2 Kings 2:13). With the custodianship of that mantle of authority came the spirit, or power, that had previously operated through Elijah during his earthly ministry.

Why was the account worded so that the anointing of Elisha seemed to be out of sequence in the natural picture? The wording made the subject more difficult to understand, for it locked the interpretation until the due time for revelation. When a subject is orderly and distinct, it can be retained with one or two readings, but that is not the case with the anointings.

From the natural standpoint, therefore, Elijah could be accredited with the anointings, even though he had been translated. However, there is a *double* application here: (1) the *natural* application pertains to what Elijah did and did not perform but was accredited with, and (2) the *spiritual* application is on a higher plane.

The *spiritual* application can be harmonized sequentially in 1 Kings 19:15,16. For instance, the first two anointings were to be Hazael as king over Syria and Jehu as king over Israel, which occurred after Elijah's translation. If we think of the *risen* Elijah as doing the three anointings, the sequence fits, for Elijah represents the Church. According to Jesus' words at his First Advent, Elijah represents the Church in both the flesh and the spirit: "Elias truly shall come, and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11). (The word "first" in the King James Version is spurious.) The Elijah of the Gospel Age (the Church in the flesh) has preached, but the world has not received the proclamation, as recorded in Malachi 4:5,6, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Because the world has not been converted during the Gospel Age when Elijah in the flesh was here, God will smite the earth with a "curse." Therefore, when Jesus said, "Elias truly shall ... restore *all things*," he was speaking of the *resurrected* Elijah.

In the *natural* application, Elijah did not think of this higher picture. He thought of Damascus and the *earthly* application and proceeded on that basis. But from the standpoint of the *risen* Elijah in the *spiritual* application, he could anoint Hazael to be king of Syria through Elisha. Knowing that Elijah had been given this commandment, Elisha obediently went about to finish the anointing work.

As discussed earlier, Elisha is a *double* type, representing either the Great Company or the Ancient Worthies depending on the nature of the work. The anointings of Hazael and Jehu will take place in the Gospel Age, but *after* the translation of Elijah. The *risen* Elijah will empower, instruct, or lead Elisha to anoint Hazael. For instance, Jesus as the *risen* Lord will smite the nations when he is King over the world. From earth's atmosphere, he will be the power behind the performance of the work, and he will initiate the judgments of the Kingdom Age by using instruments below him. Similarly, the *risen* Elijah class, the *glorified* Church, will anoint Hazael and Jehu without being down here in the flesh; the anointings will be done during an in-between period before the inauguration of the Kingdom. After Elijah's translation and glorification, the sequential consummation at the very end of the age will be the deliverance of the Great Company, the deliverance of the Holy Remnant (natural Israel) out of Jacob's Trouble, and the deliverance of mankind from the Time of Trouble.

Thus, with Elisha being a *double* type, the sequence of the anointings in the antitype is correct. The *risen* Elijah, the glorified Church, will anoint Hazael and Jehu at the end of the Gospel Age through Elisha, who represents the *Great Company*. The *risen* Elijah, the glorified Church, will do the third anointing in the Kingdom Age; namely, they will anoint Elisha, who represents the *Ancient Worthies*, to be prophet in their stead.

Notice that 1 Kings 19:15-17 has two categories: (1) Elijah was instructed to do three anointings, and (2) the *effect* of the anointings will be three slayings. Stated another way, the anointings will result in the slaying of a class. "And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay." Those who escape the sword of Hazael will be slain by Jehu, and those who escape the sword of Jehu will be slain by Elisha. To understand the antitype, we have to keep the anointings separate from the slayings (the effect of the anointings).

Now we will consider definitions. In the final account, there will be a battle in which the king of Israel enjoins the king of Judah to associate with him in fighting a common enemy, Syria, which occupied a territory called Ramoth-gilead on the east side of the Jordan River. Early in Israel's history, when Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, Ramoth-gilead was deeded to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. These 2 1/2 tribes wanted to settle

there rather than in Israel proper, and the Lord agreed to that arrangement if the men of those tribes would continue in the battle to rid Israel of its enemies. Then they could return across Jordan and settle in Ramoth-gilead.

But as history developed, there were changes in the occupancy of Ramoth-gilead. In the setting presently being considered, Syria was the occupant. Therefore, the king of Israel reasoned with the king of Judah, "The land of Ramoth-gilead belongs to us." (More particularly, it had belonged to the northern kingdom.) In any event, the king of Judah, in a patriotic gesture, agreed to join the king of Israel in the confrontation. Thus they entered Ramoth-gilead together, and in the ensuing war, the king of Israel was wounded and returned to Jezreel, his homeland, to recover. Later Jehu raced to Jezreel and killed King Jehoram of Israel. Then Jehu himself occupied the throne of Israel.

The Micaiah picture of 1 Kings 22, which took place in the previous generation, also pertained to a battle for Ramoth-gilead. King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah likewise felt that Ramoth-gilead was theirs, and they intended to recover that land from the king of Syria and restore it to the commonwealth of Israel. Through the instigation of King Jehoshaphat, Micaiah the prophet was called in. All the other 400 prophets of Israel had already testified that the two kings should enter the battle and that they would prosper. Micaiah was the lone dissenter, for his sarcastic manner and/or the inflection of his voice showed that he was not giving his blessing on their going to war to regain Ramoth-gilead. He used the illustration of Jehovah's being in heaven and inquiring of angels to see who could deceive the kings of Israel and Judah into entering this confrontation. This method of storytelling was often used, especially in the East. For instance, Jesus gave parables on many occasions, some of which were partially real-life stories, and others were fiction but taught a real lesson, spiritually speaking.

There are both similarities and dissimilarities in the Micaiah picture with kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat and this later battle with kings Jehoram and Ahaziah, as follows.

Similarities

1. The king of Judah agreed to join forces with the king of Israel to fight a battle to recover Ramoth-gilead from the king of Syria.
2. The king of Israel was slain with a bow and arrow.

These similarities seemed to indicate that the Micaiah picture and the Ramoth-gilead battle with Jehoram and Ahaziah were the same event, the latter just being more detailed. But now we are beginning to think that the time settings are different.

Dissimilarities

1. In the Micaiah picture, Ahab died in *Ramoth-gilead*, not in Israel. In the later picture, Jehoram was wounded in Ramoth-gilead, but he returned to *Israel*, where he was subsequently slain by Jehu.
2. In the Micaiah picture, when Ahab and Jehoshaphat (the king of Judah) entered the battle in Ramoth-gilead, Jehoshaphat was not killed. Not only did he return home, but for the greater part, his deeds were looked upon favorably by the Lord. However, in the later picture, King Ahaziah of Judah died, and he was viewed as an evil king by the Lord. Thus in the final picture at the end of the age, both the king of "Israel" and the king of "Judah" will die.

Several points are of interest here. What threw us off at first is that the similarities between the two pictures are very marked. In the type with Ahab and Jehoshaphat, Micaiah was called to come and give counsel and advice with regard to the battle at Ramoth-gilead. He predicted an unfavorable outcome for the king of Israel, whereas the false prophets testified that he would be victorious. Micaiah gave an allegory about an angel who came before the throne of God in

heaven and offered to be a lying spirit in the mouth of the false prophets. Immediately we think of the froglike lying spirits that will come out of the mouths of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet to deceive the nations and bring them to the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13,14,16). This similarity seemed to confirm that the Micaiah picture and the war at Ramoth-gilead with Jehoram and Ahaziah are the same. But that is not the case.

We will not pursue the natural, historical standpoint because the picture is very complicated. However, we will try to give a clue from the *scriptural* standpoint.

Elijah's experience included the 1,260 days (representing 1,260 years from AD 539 to 1799) of famine followed by a contest at Mount Carmel to reveal the true God, the principle being, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God" (1 Kings 18:24). For most of the day, the prophets of Baal moaned and groaned and prayed and slashed themselves, trying to implore Baal to consume their sacrifice on the altar. In contrast, after Elijah gave a relatively short and simple prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed his offering. There the contest was between Elijah (*one* prophet) and the 450 prophets of Baal. In the Micaiah picture, the odds were similar: about 400 false prophets and Micaiah (*one* prophet). Therefore, the Micaiah type seems to fit the *French Revolution* time setting, which involved lying spirits.

Two definitions are important. The Pastor ingeniously suggested that the king of Israel represented Catholicism because the northern kingdom, with ten tribes, was more numerous than Judah, which had only two tribes. Thus in some pictures, the king of Israel pictures Papacy, and the king of Judah represents Protestantism.

As a result of the French Revolution, Catholicism received a deadly blow. To the contrary, the Bible societies were all of Protestant origin. Catholics tried to get on the bandwagon when they saw the direction of the wind, but Papacy's wound and humiliation at the hands of Napoleon were so severe that even the papal states were lost 70 years later. Thus, as a result of the wound inflicted at the French Revolution, the beast died during the Victor Emmanuel dynasty. Later, however, the beast revived. Hence Papacy will die twice, and the second death will be *permanent*. In other words, the beast arose from the first death—it came out of, or was resurrected from, the bottomless pit—but it will not arise from the second death (Rev. 17:8). In its eighth and final condition, the beast will go into perdition, or *everlasting* destruction (Rev. 17:10,11). The *two* deaths of Papacy correspond to the deaths of *two* kings of Israel.

And there is another point. Before the Micaiah picture—in the preceding chapter, 1 Kings 21)—is the account of Naboth's vineyard. Queen Jezebel manipulated events to illegally get possession of Naboth's vineyard for King Ahab. To do this, she arranged Naboth's death by writing a letter in the king's name. This forged document was sent out, inviting elders and nobles to proclaim a fast to honor Naboth. Meanwhile, two false witnesses were set up. As a result, Naboth was slain, and his vineyard was taken by Ahab.

Jezebel, who lived quite a long time, is pictured in the Book of Revelation as a type (Rev. 2:20). Inferentially, King Ahab, her husband, represents civil power, which cooperated with Catholicism to get possession of the true vineyard. Catholicism's usurpation of this vineyard is shown in Daniel 7:8, "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." This little horn, which grew out of the Roman beast and waxed great, crushed and despoiled God's saints for 1,260 years. Accordingly, the Roman Catholic Church took over Naboth's vineyard. Catholicism has the name of Christianity, and in the Dark Ages, it was ostensibly the religion of Christ before the world with the pope being his representative. Those who were not identified with Catholicism were regarded as schismatics and heretics. Thus the Lord's vineyard was

occupied by the false element; the wheat field became a tare field (Matt. 13:26,27).

Now we will return to a discussion of Hazael. We had suggested that in 2 Kings 8 and 9, the king of Israel represents Papacy and particularly the primacy of its power as centered in Europe. Ahaziah, the king of Judah, symbolizes Protestantism, as first represented by the Church of England and Ireland. Subsequently the Church of England came to America, where it is called the Protestant Episcopal Church. In the final picture, therefore, England and the United States are related to Protestantism on one end of the spectrum, and Europe is related to Catholicism on the other end of the spectrum.

In the type, Hazael represents a nonreligious power that is not related in a nominal sense to the Lord. Syria was an alien power, whereas Israel and Judah were a common people, that is, Israel in the broad sense of the term. To show the opposing forces in a convenient illustration, Syria would represent a country like Russia.

We believe that the anointings of Hazael and Jehu are still future. This alien invading power will despoil, or destroy, the professions of nominal Christians in the Balkan states. The Balkan states, including Yugoslavia and other countries in Eastern Europe that were behind the Iron Curtain until recently, are a buffer zone between Europe proper and Russia. They are sandwiched in between the West and the East. Both Protestant and Catholic churches are in this buffer zone. The suggestion is that the professions of the nominal Christian element in this area will be destroyed before Russia invades Europe proper. In other words, a sequence is shown.

Therefore, as suggested in a past talk, what is being slain in this picture by these three elements—Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha—represents a pretended class of Christians (nominal professed Christians), which the Pastor likened to tares. The tares will be burnt; that is, they will be destroyed as tares but not necessarily as individuals (Matt. 13:30). With the radicalism of this destroying element, there will, of course, be some bloodshed, but the picture is primarily of the tares ceasing to call themselves Christians and discontinuing their former practices. This is one reason why both the anointing and the slaying of Hazael are mentioned first. Then Jehu will slay those who remain behind in the homeland, in Europe proper.

In the picture of Ramoth-gilead, which pertains to the Balkan states plus Eastern Europe, not only was King Jehoram wounded in the war, but also there were Israelite casualties. Hence Hazael did a slaying work. Those who escaped that slaying (tares in the antitype) will be dealt with by Jehu in Israel (Europe) proper. In the war for Ramoth-gilead, the king of Israel invaded what he felt belonged to him. Thus in the antitype, there will be an invasion from Europe proper into the Balkan states to recover (or deliver) what is felt to be a Christian heritage and world. For example, the pope thinks Russia should be Catholic because of the role the Russian Orthodox Church played in the past. Thus the feeling behind the invasion from Europe into the Balkan states will be, "This belongs to us, and it should be Christianized."

Already we see that Russia is trying to suppress the liberties of Latvians, Lithuanians, etc., and there is a condition of flux. Therefore, if a radical element gets into power in Russia, the situation will be quite different. Remember that Hazael assassinated the king of Syria and occupied the throne in his stead, just as Jehu assassinated Jehoram, the king of Israel, and became king himself. Thus a change of power will take place in Russia, as pictured by Hazael of Syria, and there will also be a change of power in Europe, as pictured by Jehu of Israel.

In certain pictures in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Babylon represents an anti-Christian power, for example, Sheshach in Jeremiah 25:26. The Chaldeans, a fierce people and an alien power, are shown visiting judgments on Jerusalem (a representation of Christendom). The point is that, *depending on context*, Babylon sometimes pictures Christendom and sometimes the

radical element. And in certain books of the Bible, the king of Syria takes the place of the radical king-of-Babylon element.

A lot of information is being presented, but the point is that Jehu's change of heart took place when he was a captain of the forces of King Jehoram, who invaded Ramoth-gilead to try to liberate and restore the land to Israel. Jehu was anointed in that situation, so he came from Ramoth-gilead and replaced Jehoram. In the antitype, the Jehu element will come from the Balkans into Europe and displace the Papacy and Catholicism entirely. As we proceed in the verse-by-verse consideration of 2 Kings 9 and 10, we will see how amazingly complete the Jehu picture is.

We think all this information has been providentially hidden because of the multiplicity of detail, the confusion of the characters with duplicate names, and the repetition with Ramoth-gilead. We believe that the suggested equation is reasonable from a scriptural standpoint.

Elisha was the last of the three to be anointed and do a slaying work. In the higher spiritualized picture of this whole drama, Elisha represents the Ancient Worthies in the Kingdom Age. As "princes" in all the earth, they will be teachers of mankind from a natural, or human, standpoint because the Church will be divine beings like Jesus (Psa. 45:16). The Law will go forth from Zion, the spiritual phase of the Kingdom, but the word of the Lord, the instruction, will be down here, going forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3). Many nominal Christians are in the grave, having died all down the Gospel Age. When resurrected, they will still be nominal Christians with confused thinking. (As a tree falls, so shall it lie—Eccl. 11:3.) Therefore, when they come forth from the grave, they will need to be "slain" as far as their former beliefs are concerned. Elisha, the Ancient Worthies, will provide the necessary instruction. The final result is that there will be no more false, pseudo, or imitation Christians; *no tares will be left at all*.

The slaying work of Hazael in 2 Kings 8 will take place in the antitypical Ramoth-gilead, whereas the slaying work of Jehu in 2 Kings 9 and 10 will occur in Europe proper. The end of chapter 10 tells that later Hazael will go down and cause problems "in all the coasts of Israel," so that Israel will be cut short, or shrunken. "In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel" (2 Kings 10:32). We believe this verse refers to Jacob's Trouble, although details are not given.

The lying spirits of Revelation 16:13,14 apply to this picture, in which the Western world will invade the Eastern world to try to get the land of Ramoth-gilead. The invasion will eventually lead to the destruction of both. The fact that Hazael will do the first slaying suggests *time*. The despoliation of the Christian churches will begin in Eastern Europe and then go into Europe proper. Still later it will go into the United States. Hence the slaying will be progressive. First, King Jehoram of Israel was slain in Jezreel by Jehu with a bow and arrow. King Ahaziah of Judah made a temporary escape but was slain by Jehu a little later in Megiddo in northern Israel. The details of the account show *time progression* with regard to the fall of mystic Babylon. The fall will be sudden in each area but progressive, starting in the east and going westward and then on into America. The same situation will occur in this country; that is, a radical element will take over.

Jehu replaced Jehoram as the king of Israel. Initially, the *ten tribes*, the *ten horns*, supported Jehoram in the battle in Ramoth-gilead. But when Jehu returned to Israel, he inherited the ten horns and despoiled both Jehoram (Papacy) and Jezebel (Catholicism), and then he continued the destruction right on down the line. Therefore, we believe that the more-detailed Jehu picture is the final one with regard to Christendom.

The suggestions we are making are quite comprehensive, and they appear reasonable to us.

However, we are not dogmatic about them. We believe the details will clarify as time goes on.

2 Kings 8:7 And Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.

2 Kings 8:8 And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

2 Kings 8:9 So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

2 Kings 8:10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shown me that he shall surely die.

Comment: Elisha's message for Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, was, "Thou mayest certainly recover." Then the prophet spoke an aside, or an addendum, to Hazael: "Howbeit the LORD hath shown me that he [Ben-hadad] shall surely die."

2 Kings 8:11 And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept.

2 Kings 8:12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

2 Kings 8:13 And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shown me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

"And he [Elisha] settled his countenance stedfastly, until he [Hazael] was ashamed: and the man of God [Elisha] wept."

Comment: Knowing exactly what Hazael would do, Elisha stared at him.

Reply: What a hypocrite! Hazael then said, "Am I a dog that I should cause a great slaughter in Israel?" In the antitype, Israel is Christendom.

2 Kings 8:14 So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldest surely recover.

2 Kings 8:15 And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

The very next day after Hazael delivered Elisha's message, he smothered Ben-hadad. In other words, Ben-hadad would recover, so Hazael hastened the matter and assassinated him. He probably thought, "If Ben-hadad lives long enough, I will not get to be king." Thus he made sure that he quickly occupied Ben-hadad's place.

What a shrewd method of assassination! The smothering left no marks; it looked like a natural death. Hazael probably felt justified through twisted reasoning: "Elisha said the king would die, even though he would recover. Therefore, since I have already been anointed, I will hurry the matter along." In other words, Hazael interrupted what would have been a recovery.

2 Kings 8:16 And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.

2 Kings 8:17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

2 Kings 8:18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

2 Kings 8:19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, and to his children.

This evil King Jehoram reigned in Jerusalem (*Judah*) and thus was not in the final picture. (The Jehoram in the final picture was the king of *Israel*.) *Judah's* King Jehoram passed off the scene before Ahaziah, his son, came to the throne of *Judah*. Ahaziah was involved with Israel's King Jehoram in Ramoth-gilead.

2 Kings 8:20 In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

2 Kings 8:21 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.

2 Kings 8:22 Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

2 Kings 8:23 And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 8:24 And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Ahaziah was now the king of Judah—but for a very short time, that is, for a little more than a year (see verse 26). Jehoram was still the king of Israel at this juncture.

Some trouble that developed between Judah and Edom is sandwiched in before the battle for Ramoth-gilead with Jehu. As we have suggested, that trouble is taking place now. Edom is the land of Esau, but the tribe of Esau has spread out. Today hardly anyone lives in what was previously Edom, for it is a relatively desolate area, but those peoples have migrated. Genesis 16:12 says that Ishmael's progeny would be a "wild man." "And he [Ishmael's progeny] will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." His descendants would live a bedouin type of existence and would not listen to reason.

There was a battle and bloodshed between Judah and Edom, but the battle did not result in the complete subjugation of Edom.

2 Kings 8:25 In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.

2 Kings 8:26 Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned

one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.

2 Kings 8:27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

To repeat, the personalities who would be involved in the war in Ramoth-gilead were King Jehoram of Israel (abbreviated "Joram" here) and King Ahaziah of Judah. Notice that intermarriage, a mixture, between Israel and Judah caused contamination. Athaliah was the daughter of Omri, a very wicked king of *Israel*, and she was also the mother of King Ahaziah of *Judah*. This family relationship carried over, for her name will come up again later.

Comment: Here Ahaziah was said to be 22 years old when he started to reign, but 2 Chronicles 22:2 states that he was 42 years old.

Reply: There are about four such discrepancies, three of which can be easily reconciled by making a table. Usually the accounts in Chronicles are used in recording the lengths of the reigns of the kings, particularly because the ten-tribe kingdom went into captivity first.

2 Kings 8:28 And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.

2 Kings 8:29 And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

Jehoram was wounded in the battle at Ramoth-gilead, so he returned to Jezreel. Jehoram and Ahaziah had combined their forces and invaded Ramoth-gilead, which had historically belonged to them because the Lord had so deeded it when the Israelites entered the land in the days of Joshua.

If this account represents conditions at the end of the age, the combined forces of Catholicism and Protestantism will invade the Balkan states. The ten-tribe kingdom with Jehoram pictures the ten nations of Europe, which are basically Catholic: Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Germany, etc. The two-tribe kingdom with Ahaziah represents England and the United States, which are primarily Protestant. The two-horned beast will combine with the image of the beast to make up the false prophet. In the past, the two-horned beast was the Church of England and Ireland, but in a *Reprint* article, the Pastor called attention to the fact that one horn of the two-horned beast had withered and died. As time went on, the arrangement ceased as far as Ireland was concerned, and the representation was Protestantism.

In the antitype, the coalition of the ten tribes and the two tribes under Jehoram and Ahaziah, respectively, comports with the desire for unity, or ecumenism, between Catholicism and the Protestant churches. The intention is to have a common working alliance to improve the Christian religion and its influence in the earth from a political standpoint. God did not approve of this alliance in the type, nor does He approve of the ecumenical alliance in the antitype.

As already stated, Hazael represents a non-Christian power. For example, Russia is basically an atheistic government. When Jehoram, the king of Israel, was wounded in the war at Ramoth-gilead, he retreated back to his home base, or Europe proper, to be healed. Not much is said about Ahaziah's activity, but he went to visit the wounded Jehoram. God showed His disapproval over Ahaziah's going up to commiserate with Jehoram in his wounded condition.

In fact, Ahaziah did not live long after that; his reign was cut short.

Incidentally, the liberation of Eastern Europe is only temporary. It is in a state of flux now. The euphoria was high, as many thought Russia and the Balkan states would become democratic. Ostensibly they wanted to be democratic, but they may have had ulterior motives that were part of a grand strategy. A backlash is already beginning to take place. Prophecy shows that Gog of the north will come down as an enemy power.

2 Kings 9:1 And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead:

2 Kings 9:2 And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber;

2 Kings 9:3 Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

2 Kings 9:4 So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead.

The anointing of Jehu to be king over Israel was about to take place. Accordingly, Elisha instructed one of the sons of the prophets how to do the anointing. Afterwards the prophet was to flee, but why would fleeing be to his advantage? Because Jehu would not want news of the anointing to leak out prematurely, he might kill the prophet to silence him. In short, the prophet fled for his own safety.

Comment: Similarly, the advice to the world for the Time of Trouble is to stay out of the way of the Lord's chariot and not get involved in the trouble.

Q: Was Jehu literally carried into an inner chamber?

A: No, the thought is, "Conduct him to an inner chamber." The Old English of the King James has to be adjusted to today's vocabulary. Another example is, "Quit you like men" (1 Cor. 16:13); that is, "Be like a man."

Q: Was this individual very young since he was called "one of the *children* of the prophets"?

A: No, the term is similar to "the *children* of Israel," meaning Israelites of *all* ages. Thus the word "children" was used in a broad sense.

Q: Then why was this individual called a "young man" twice? "So the *young man*, even the *young man* the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead."

A: He would not have been a teenager or younger, but he was young enough to be fleet of foot so that he could *run* the necessary distance to deliver the message in Ramoth-gilead and then flee quickly. The age of the prophet is probably significant in the antitype.

2 Kings 9:5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain.

2 Kings 9:6 And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people

of the LORD, even over Israel.

2 Kings 9:7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.

2 Kings 9:8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel:

2 Kings 9:9 And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah:

2 Kings 9:10 And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled.

We can picture this anointing happening in Ramoth-gilead. A group of captains were assembled in a room when the prophet arrived. (These were not just ordinary soldiers but “captains of the host.”) When the prophet said, “I have a message for you, O captain,” the natural question was, “Which captain? Whom do you wish to address?” The prophet either pointed to Jehu or looked him in the eye and then directed him to an inner room for privacy. Of course all the captains, including Jehu, were curious about this secret message, thinking it must be quite important. Jehu was anointed and told that God wanted him to be the king of Israel instead of Jehoram, who was wounded and back in Jezreel in Samaria. The message continued: God had appointed Jehu to smite the house of Ahab to avenge the blood of all the true prophets and to slay Jezebel. Moreover, dogs would eat Jezebel in Jezreel and she would not be buried. Jehu would have been stunned to hear this message. The prophet then opened the door, exited, and fled in haste back to Elisha.

2 Kings 9:11 Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication.

2 Kings 9:12 And they said, It is false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.

2 Kings 9:13 Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

When Jehu returned to the room with the other captains, one of them asked, “Why did that mad fellow come to you? What did he say?” The way the prophet had burst onto the scene and said he had a message for Jehu, taken him into an inner room, and then run out was exciting.

The other captains assumed the message was false until they heard it. Jehu announced, “The prophet poured oil on my head and said God wants me to be king over Israel.” Immediately the captains acknowledged Jehu as king. No doubt they knew about Jehoram’s wound, and they had been more or less left without leadership.

The time factor is interesting, for Elijah was off the scene. Elisha, the prophet in his stead, pictures the Great Company here. When the mantle fell from Elijah, Elisha rent his own mantle in twain. Thenceforth, based on his activities, Elisha was a double type. In some instances, he represents the Ancient Worthies, particularly in healing and restoration works. In other pictures, he represents the Great Company, who will be active after the translation of Elijah.

It is significant that *Elisha* gave the instruction to one of the sons of the prophets, telling him that the message was of the Lord and that he should inform Jehu about his future. The identities of both Elijah and Elisha are sure, but the identity of the sons of the prophets is more nebulous. One suggestion is that they are familiar with the truth but are not necessarily consecrated with the hope of a spiritual change, yet they will become active later on, that is, at this stage of prophetic fulfillment. Another suggestion is that they will be Jews, as indicated in the Song of Solomon and elsewhere. A third possibility is that they are not consecrated but are related to the Truth movement in a fraternal or paternal way.

Just who will do this anointing is not clear at the present time. The emphasis is simply on a “young man.” Of course the high calling will have ended, but somehow this class, who remain to be identified, will get Jehu interested in certain truths. Jehu will then act as a terror, causing repeated bloodbaths and killing. Through Jehu in the type, the Lord did a cleansing work, sweeping away the influence the ten-tribe kingdom had under Ahab, Jezebel, etc.

Q: How will the anointing with oil be carried out in the antitype?

A: The oil represents the Holy Spirit, but in this case, it will be a calling to *destroy*. For instance, Cyrus, a *heathen* king, was called the Lord’s “anointed” (Isa. 45:1). Cyrus did not worship the God of Israel, but God had designed that he would do a judgment work. The same was true of Nebuchadnezzar, although the word “anoint” was not used with him.

Thus there can be a calling to destroy, and the Holy Spirit is involved. In the antitype, one part of the future message will be seized upon and received readily by the Jehu class, who are not interested in spiritual things. The Jehu class will take the portion of the message they are pleased with.

God had prophesied that a judgment would come on the house of Ahab after his death. (The judgment was delayed to a later generation because Ahab had repented.) The Jehu class will be only too glad to see that the judgment comes to pass.

Comment: Knowing the heart condition of people, God can select a worldly person or class to fulfill a certain role.

Reply: Yes. Such individuals will be empowered to accomplish that role. As an example, God said to Cyrus, “When you won all your past victories, the gates of cities were opened unto you. Who do you think did the opening? It was I, the LORD God. And who gave you the name Cyrus? I did, for a couple hundred years ago, I predicted your birth and your name.” Cyrus was more kindly disposed toward the Jews because a Hebrew prophet had predicted he would be raised up in history as a great power. The Holy Spirit has diverse operations (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Heb. 1:1; 2:4). God’s Spirit and Word can create storms, winds, messengers—all kinds of things.

Q: At this point in time, will Elisha, the Great Company, give a smiting message?

A: Yes. Elisha will do a smiting work; he will give a smiting message. Perhaps one in close proximity to Elisha will hear the message and convey it to Jehu, who, along with Bidkar, a buddy captain, had heard years earlier the Elijah prophecy of the destruction of Papacy and Catholicism (verses 25, 36, and 37). Hence they will accredit Elijah with the slaying work. In other words, Elisha will be on the scene and, in turn, influence someone close to him who will deliver the message to Jehu. This “son of a prophet” will be the channel through which the message is conveyed, and Jehu will respond, as the prophecy indicates.

After the prophet anointed Jehu with oil, he said, “You will smite the house of Ahab, for the whole house will perish, and dogs will eat Jezebel in Jezreel because of her responsibility there” (verses 7-10). Later, however, the credit was given to Elijah. Thus the information was third-hand. Elijah was first told to anoint Jehu, but subsequently Elisha sent someone else to do the anointing.

What is the significance of verse 13? “Then they [the other captains] hastened, and took every man his garment, and put it under him [Jehu] on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.” Happy to hear the message, the other captains accepted it as coming from a *true* prophet. Putting their garments under Jehu for him to sit on means that they recognized him as king and that they wanted him to know he had their full support. Similarly, the disciples put their coats under Jesus when he rode into Jerusalem as a King on the foal of an ass.

The ceremony for Jehu took place on the top of the “stairs,” an elevated area nearby. Trumpets were blown, and Jehu was proclaimed king. Nevertheless, news of his kingship was to be kept secret until he could act posthaste to eliminate Jehoram. Therefore, Jehu *hastened* to Jezreel. Now that he had been anointed king, if he did nothing, Jehoram would assassinate him upon hearing the news.

2 Kings 9:14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria.

This Jehu was the son of Jehoshaphat, who was the son of Nimshi. In other words, this Jehoshaphat was not the former king of Judah but another individual with the same name. The picture is providentially confusing with two Jehorams, two Ahaziah, and two Jehoshaphats. There are also duplications with some minor, insignificant characters.

2 Kings 9:15 But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel.

2 Kings 9:16 So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram.

2 Kings 9:17 And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?

King Jehoram of Israel was in Jezreel recovering from his wounds, and King Ahaziah of Judah had gone there to see him. Meanwhile, Jehu and at least one other party (Bidkar, his captain) were racing to meet them. As they approached, a watchman on the tower in Jezreel saw them afar off but did not recognize Jehu because of the distance. Since the northern kingdom was the responsibility of King Jehoram of Israel, he sent out a messenger, a horseman, to find out what the news was with the chariot coming so fast (verse 20). “Is it peace? Is it good news?”

2 Kings 9:18 So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.

2 Kings 9:19 Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.

2 Kings 9:20 And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.

2 Kings 9:21 And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.

When the first messenger went out and met Jehu, the latter told him not to return to Jehoram. Seeing what was happening, the watchman reported that the messenger was not coming back. The king of Israel sent a second messenger out to Jehu, and the same thing occurred. Jehu did not want word to get back to Jehoram ahead of him. Now Jehu was close enough for the watchman to recognize him from the way he was riding “furiously.” Not only did Jehu have a reputation, but this type of riding fit his character for the work he would do. The watchman must have first seen Jehu a *long* way off, for even when Jehu rode as fast as he could, the watchman did not recognize him until after the *second* messenger went out on horseback and did not return.

Next kings Jehoram and Ahaziah went out in chariots to meet Jehu, still not realizing that treachery was involved. The two messengers knew that the news was bad, but they did not so inform the kings. Jehoram and Ahaziah met Jehu in the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. Right away that information strikes a bell, for years earlier Jezebel had plotted to get the vineyard for Ahab by manipulating Naboth’s death. At the time, Elijah prophesied that the blood of Ahab’s son would be spilled in that area because of this atrocious act committed by Ahab and Jezebel.

Q: Why did Jehu tell the two messengers not to return to King Jehoram?

A: Jehu did not want Jehoram to have time to prepare a defense. He wanted to capture the king by surprise. The surprise element was very important for what he intended to do.

2 Kings 9:22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?

2 Kings 9:23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah.

2 Kings 9:24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.

2 Kings 9:25 Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him;

2 Kings 9:26 Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD.

Jehu remembered the details of Elijah’s prophecy. Hence he gave *Elijah* the credit, even though he had been anointed by the son of a prophet.

It is significant that although King Ahab had died previously and King Jehoram was now dead,

Jezebel was still alive at this time. In the antitype, the correspondency is that the beast dies *twice* and the woman dies only *once*.

Comment: Since Naboth is a throwback to the time of Constantine in the antitype, this incident with Jehu means that at the end of the age, part of the smiting message will be a recall of something that happened back there.

Reply: Yes, the smiting message will be something along the order of the leopard not changing its spots and the woman being unmasked—the veil will be pulled off her face. In other words, there will be a review of past wrong deeds. An element that will be furious about Papacy will be instrumental in dispatching the system and those associated with it.

Jehu and his friend Bidkar were both aware of Elijah’s prophecy. Accordingly, Jehu instructed Bidkar to take Jehoram’s corpse and cast it into Naboth’s plot of ground in fulfillment of that prophecy.

Q: Did the spoiling of Naboth’s vineyard end with the French Revolution?

A: Yes. After that, the true woman was delivered and refreshed through the Bible societies, but nevertheless, the blood that was shed in the Dark Ages has to be avenged. “And when he [Jesus] had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:9,10).

Q: For clarification, does Naboth represent the true Church?

A: He pictures the truly consecrated earlier in the Gospel Age.

When King Jehoram realized that treachery was afoot, he warned King Ahaziah. But Jehu shot Jehoram with an arrow through the heart. Now, with Jehoram’s death, Jehu was the uncontested king of Israel.

In the antitype, when Europe invades the Balkan states (the middle ground between that continent and Russia), the forces will return weakened and wounded, and eventually the European order will collapse. The pope and others will be quite involved with this setup.

Notice that Ahaziah was not dealt with right away when Jehoram died. Attention was first focused on the king of Israel, and later it went to Ahaziah of Judah, who fled and went into hiding in the Megiddo area, which was not far away from Jezreel.

“Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.” The term “a bow with his full strength” is truth in the antitype. When the Jehu class are enlightened as to what has happened, that truth will be instrumental in the death of the previous leadership. The ten horns will first support the beast, and then ten *different horns* will despoil, or be at enmity with, the woman. “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.... And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire” (Rev. 17:12,13,16).

Q: Does Jehu’s arrow going “between his [Jehoram’s] arms”—that is, through his heart—

picture Rome as the seat, or center, of Papacy?

A: Yes. Just as the heart is a vital organ, so Papacy is the root of the problems. This picture, among others, shows that the Vatican will be despoiled before the Gospel Age fully terminates.

2 Kings 9:27 But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there.

2 Kings 9:28 And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David.

2 Kings 9:29 And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.

Comment: King Ahaziah of Judah, who reigned only one year, was dealt with more gently after he died.

Reply: Yes, he was buried with his fathers in a sepulchre in Jerusalem. Ahaziah died in Megiddo, or Armageddon in the antitype. With the infamy having its birth in Europe, in Rome, Jezebel and Jehoram had ignominious deaths with no lasting memorial. Both are centered in Rome in the antitype. These deaths are yet future, for there must be ten kings who support the beast before Jehu, who became the king of the ten tribes, manifests the opposite sentiment, resulting in the destruction of Christendom. In one sense, the support of the ten kings exists now through consistories in the various nations, but it will exist in a special or coordinated fashion in the hour of power at the very end of the age. The support of the first ten horns will occur when the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet give a united false message that gathers the forces together to Armageddon (Rev. 16:13,14,16).

The Jehu type brings order out of a lot of details of history, and the nature of the details are rather sensational. For example, Jezebel is very important in prophecy, not only in the Old Testament as a wicked queen but also in the Book of Revelation. The Megiddo of the Old Testament is related to Armageddon in Revelation.

2 Kings 9:30 And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.

2 Kings 9:31 And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?

2 Kings 9:32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.

2 Kings 9:33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot.

Jezebel put on cosmetics, “tired” (“adorned”—RSV) her head, and looked out the window, knowing that Jehu was entering the courtyard in Jezreel. Then she greeted him by calling out, “Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?” (The RSV has, “Is it peace, you Zimri, murderer of your master?”) Thus Jezebel knew that Jehu had murdered Jehoram and was now the king of Israel in his stead.

Why did Jezebel attire herself in this manner and speak these words? If she had wanted to

seduce him, wouldn't her words have been different? Her attiring herself was not compatible with the style of her speech. Therefore, her dressing up was for another purpose with regard to Jehu; namely, she attempted to *overawe* him. She assumed a stance of *regality* as she called him "Zimri," which was not his name. Zimri was a traitor in the ten-tribe kingdom who slew his master, a former king, just as Jehu did. Thus Jezebel was doing exactly the wrong thing if she was trying to seduce and enamor him. Rather, she wanted to awe Jehu by putting on an air that she was not afraid. Her posture was, "I do not intend to be a widow or to be slain."

In history, there was a time when the barbarians invaded Italy, and in order to save the Vatican, one of the popes went out all dressed up in regalia to meet the barbarian king, who was in the shaggy clothing of his rough life. Being awed, the barbarian king, who had murdered people and looted their possessions, now made a treaty with the pope, for he respected the pope and the Papacy. Jezebel used a strategy along that line.

Q: With Jezebel's words in the King James being, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" could she have been saying the following? "Zimri's actions did not bring him peace. Be careful and think about what you are doing. If you cause more treachery, you will not have peace." Then her attiring herself would be to instill fear in Jehu and bring him into submission.

A: We prefer the Revised Standard Version. Jezebel was bold, and she tried to stop Jehu in his tracks by assuming this fearless posture and questioning him. If Jehu had been submissive, she might have given him amnesty and used him as she did Ahab earlier. However, the prophecy indicated otherwise.

Comment: Zimri reigned only seven days and caused a bloodbath (1 Kings 16:8-10,15).

Reply: Baasha, Omri, and Zimri created anarchy with assassination plots in the last days before the ten tribes were taken into captivity 150 or more years prior to Judah's captivity.

Q: Who are the "eunuchs" in the antitype?

A: We think they are servants of the false Church. Priests and nuns are supposed to be eunuchs because they do not marry. Instead they "marry" the Catholic Church and become eunuchs for the false Kingdom's sake, dedicating their lives to support that institution. In other words, some of Jezebel's most trusted servants will turn against her. Thus various elements will be involved in the destruction and death of the false system—Jehu, eunuchs, and dogs.

Q: Who are the "dogs"?

A: They are a nonreligious, non-Catholic Gentile element within Christendom. Jehu was of that same disposition and spirit, but he was in Ramoth-gilead when anointed king. He came back and took over the leadership.

Revelation 17:16 states that the ten horns will hate the whore. We had suggested in *The Keys of Revelation* that when the Vatican enclaves, who are represented in the ten kingdoms of Europe, see which way the wind is blowing, they will cooperate in Jezebel's destruction. In other words, the ten horns are not only the civil powers who will turn and rend Papacy but also the papal nuncios, who will not support Papacy when the tide turns. Just as there will be ten civil leaders of Europe, so there will be *ten* papal nuncios, or chief representatives of Papacy, in these various governments, or kingdoms, of Europe.

Jezebel's death is the fall of the Roman Catholic Church—ecclesiasticism. The beast, the Papacy, the governmental aspect, will die first. The beast died once in the past (Rev. 17:8,11), but the

woman never ceased, for if the Catholic Church did not exist, there would be no Papacy—it would just evaporate. Stated another way, the Roman Catholic Church can exist without Papacy, but Papacy cannot exist without the Roman Catholic Church. The mother Church survived when Papacy went into disfavor in the past because there are two different elements, or perspectives. Therefore, the beast will die first, then the woman. The fifth and eighth heads of the beast are more or less the *same* in one respect, whereas the horns, the European powers, are *separate* from, and not part of, the beast, the Papacy.

Comment: We think of Jehoram as Papacy, the beast, the *governmental* aspect of Catholicism, and Ahaziah is the false prophet, the *governmental* aspect of Protestantism.

Reply: Protestantism has always been weak, and even in this picture, Ahaziah is shown in a negative or secondary sense. As a whole, with few exceptions, the evangelical churches and the more traditional or staid churches, such as the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church, will be in cahoots with the government. At present, the United States government cannot show partiality toward religion, but at the end of the age, religion will be called in to help. Today if government recognized the Catholic religion in a formal way, the Protestants would say, “What about us?” and turmoil would result. But at the end of the age, it will become a political matter with the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet speaking and acting in unison. In Europe, the political aspect already exists, for the governments have shown partiality toward religion for some time.

Comment: Jeremiah 4:30 reads, “And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.”

Reply: That text describes the attractiveness of the false system, but we do not think it applies to Jezebel’s motive with Jehu. She looked out the window with *regality* the way the pope looks out the window over St. Peter’s Square, and a past pope went out to meet the barbarians with the triple crown, jewels, and luxurious clothing. Jezebel will want to awe, distract, momentarily shock, and thus change Jehu’s thinking and intention to work mischief. The pope has a unique office as head of both the Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church. When he looks out the window in his white robes, the papal banner is seen, and a red carpet is thrown over the windowsill. The people below in the square get down on their knees to kneel before him.

2 Kings 9:34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king’s daughter.

2 Kings 9:35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.

2 Kings 9:36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, 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:

2 Kings 9:37 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.

After the dogs consumed the rest of Jezebel, her skull, hands, and feet were not buried but lay as dung in the field. Therefore, no tombstone marked her remains, although, to our understanding, this entire incident has been recorded on film. The skull signifies that the bad memory, or smoke, of Jezebel will be perpetuated. Her hands represent her works, and her

feet picture her conduct. The fact that no body remained indicates the *permanent* extinction of the false religious system. A skull is not attractive, and neither is the memory of Papacy.

Again Jehu acknowledged Elijah as having prophesied these events. “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.”

Chapters 9 and 10 show the fall of mystic Babylon and the burning of the tares. The Little Flock will be complete before the destruction of the nominal system, but when all false professions cease, the Great Company will still be on hand, for their trial will occur subsequently.

Review of 2 Kings 9

Because so many names are similar, the following table may be helpful.

<u>Israel, the ten-tribe kingdom</u>	<u>Judah, the two-tribe kingdom</u>
Ahab*	Jehoshaphat*
Ahaziah	Jehoram (Joram)
Jehoram (Joram)†	Ahaziah†
Jehu was anointed and became king	

*Kings of Israel and Judah who fought the king of Syria in the first battle in Ramoth-gilead.

†Kings of Israel and Judah who fought the king of Syria in the second battle in Ramoth-gilead.

There were two Ahaziahs and two Jehorams (one each in Israel and Judah). Ahab and Jehoshaphat were the kings in the Micaiah account in regard to the first battle in Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22). In that battle, Ahab was slain, and his body was carried back to the homeland, Israel. In fulfillment of Elijah’s prophecy, which God had declared against Ahab because of his sins, dogs licked up his blood in the plot of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21:19; 22:37,38).

The word “plat [plot]” has a double significance, for the etymology that has come down to us has two meanings: (1) to scheme or be cunning about a matter, and (2) a piece of ground. We believe the double meaning is derived from the scriptural accounts of the deaths of Naboth, Ahab, and Jehoram. When the United States was originally founded, the fact that it was Bible-oriented had a strong effect on the language.

Upon Naboth’s refusal to sell his vineyard to Ahab, Jezebel set a trap for him by first having a festivity and then producing two false witnesses who accused him of speaking blasphemy against God and the king. As a result, Naboth was stoned outside the city. Then Jezebel told Ahab to go and take possession of Naboth’s vineyard. While Ahab was in the vineyard, Elijah the prophet came to him and uttered a prophecy of retribution. When the king humbled himself and repented, the fulfillment of that prophecy was postponed for a while. But later, when Ahab went into battle at Ramoth-gilead, he was slain, his body was brought back in a chariot, and dogs licked up his blood in this place of Naboth, as Elijah had predicted.

A few years later Jehoram and Ahaziah joined forces to fight the king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead. Thus the kings of Israel and Judah fought a second battle in the same area with the same enemy, the king of Syria. This time Jehu was one of the captains. It was in the twelfth year of Jehoram, a grandson of Ahab, that Ahaziah began to reign as the king of Judah. Therefore, the two years of Ahaziah plus the 12 years of Jehoram make a total of 14 years, which was all the time that elapsed between the death of Ahab and the death of Jehoram.

In Jehu's bloodbath, Jehoram was the first to be slain. Having been wounded in the battle with Ahaziah against Hazael of Syria, Jehoram returned to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds, and Ahaziah went to see him there (2 Kings 8:28,29). Meanwhile, Jehu was secretly anointed king in Ramoth-gilead by a son of the prophets sent by Elisha. Jehu raced back to Jezreel, killed Jehoram, and cast his body into the very plot of land where Naboth had died (2 Kings 9:21-26).

What happened to Ahab and Jehoram, each a king of the *ten* tribes, pictures what will happen to the *ten* nations of Europe in the future. The Book of Revelation tells that Papacy (pictured first by Ahab and then by Jehoram) dies *twice*. Jezebel, who represents Catholicism, the ecclesiastical aspect, dies *once*. "The beast [Papacy] that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition [everlasting destruction]" (Rev. 17:8). Papacy died once in the past, revived, and will die the second time *forever*. The information is repeated three verses later: "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (Rev. 17:11).

The Revelation narrative, or prophecy, continues. "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These [the ten horns] have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These [the ten horns and the beast] shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:12-14). The beast with the ten horns (the ten nations of Europe) will make war with the Lamb. Revelation 19:19 also speaks of this war: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth [the ten nations of Europe], and their armies, gathered together to make war against him [the Lamb, Jesus] that sat on the [white] horse, and against his army [the feet members]."

Clearly, there will be a war. This *same* war is described in chapters 17 and 19. Thus chapter 19 repeats the information in chapter 17. In this war, the Lamb will ultimately triumph. The beast and the false prophet will be cast into the "lake of fire" in defeat (Rev. 19:20). Chapter 19 adds a little more detail to the *same* event.

What we are trying to say is that the beast will be destroyed *before* the woman. Revelation 17 is a key chapter. The *beast's* going into perdition is mentioned twice (verses 8 and 11). The war between the *beast* and the ten horns versus the Lamb is mentioned in verse 14, that is, *before* the judgment comes on the *woman*, as stated in verse 16: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the *whore*, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

A comparison of verses 12, 13, and 16 in Revelation 17 shows that the *same* ten horns which *earlier* support the beast *later* hate the whore. Note: In supporting the beast (Papacy) earlier, the ten horns also support the woman (the Catholic Church). However, verse 16 describes how the woman is dealt with. The ten horns that previously support Papacy will *cease* their support and *hate* the whore (the false Church) and destroy her.

In the prophetic battle described in 2 Kings 8 and 9, Jehoram was the king of Israel, and Ahaziah was the king of Judah. Jehoram represents Papacy as a *temporal* power, and Ahaziah pictures Protestantism in connection with *temporal* power. Both will be involved in the confrontation at the end of the age. Jehoram was wounded in Ramoth-gilead, so he returned to Jezreel to recuperate (2 Kings 8:29). In the meantime, Ahaziah went up to Jezreel to visit and comfort him. For this act, God rebuked Ahaziah (2 Chron. 22:5-7).

While King Jehoram of Israel was alive, he supported the old order, being sympathetic to the deceased Ahab and to Jezebel. But when Jehu, a captain in Israel, returned to Jezreel and killed

Jehoram, becoming king in his stead, he was not at all sympathetic to the old arrangement. Jehu slew Jehoram (Papacy) and Ahaziah and was also involved in the slaying of Jezebel.

As the king of Israel, Jehu was the king of the ten tribes. In other words, the ten horns, which support the beast, or Papacy, are represented by Jehoram, the king of Israel, whom Jehu slew and replaced. Stated another way, the ten horns (the ten powers of Europe), which previously support the beast, will subsequently *hate* the whore and be involved in her *destruction*. Just as Jehoram supported Jezebel but was replaced by Jehu, who called for her destruction, so the powers of Europe will turn against Catholicism in the final analysis.

And there is another point. Jehu represents that when the ten powers, or nations, of Europe hate the whore, they will be *nonreligious*. Not only will they not support the old system, but they will be intent upon changing the whole arrangement.

Elijah represents the true Church in the flesh during the Gospel Age. Therefore, when he was translated into heaven, he represented the feet members. Elijah was alive when Ahab was on the scene, and he was also alive when Jehoram began to reign (2 Kings 1:17).

2 Chronicles 21:12-15 tells that Elijah sent a letter to King Jehoram *of Judah*, stating that because of his wickedness, he would die of an incurable disease whereby his bowels would rot and fall out. Accordingly, Jehoram died two years after this prophecy (2 Chron. 21:18,19). He was evil, walking after the ways of Israel. Intermarriage had occurred, and the practices of the ten tribes were becoming the practices of Judah. Thus Jehoram received judgment.

This letter from Elijah to Jehoram of Judah was significant because it was sent two years before Jehoram died. Although Elijah did not come in person, the letter proves he was alive at that time. This incident occurred *before* the final confrontation at Ramoth-gilead. Elijah was also on the scene during Ahaziah's reign, as shown by the account in 2 Kings. However, the prophet was off the scene when Jehu was anointed. Proof for this statement is the fact that *Elisha* sent a son of the prophets to do the anointing. Thus the feet members will be gone *before Babylon falls*.

The point is that the anointing of Jehu is still a *future* event. Jehu represents a *class* that will be against the false practices of Christendom and will be instrumental in its destruction. At one time, the ten tribes of Israel were favorable to Jezebel, but when Jehu took the reigns of power, the ten tribes switched sides and supported him in wiping out the house of Ahab.

The very fact these individuals had similar names occurred intentionally to confuse the picture until the due time for understanding the antitype. Before the antitype can even start to be considered, one must understand and be familiar with the *literal* account and be able to keep the names straight. In other words, there has to be *real Bible study first* in order to at least understand the vocabulary and the identity of the characters who are involved. Next comes *reasoning* with regard to the activity. Incidentally, there were also two Jehus: Jehu the seer and Jehu the king of Israel. To straighten out the distinctions in the similar names, we have to go back and forth and compare 1 and 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

2 Kings 10:1 And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children, saying,

2 Kings 10:2 Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour;

2 Kings 10:3 Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set him on his

father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

2 Kings 10:4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand?

2 Kings 10:5 And he that was over the house, and he that was over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of the children, sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.

Ahab had been slain much earlier, and now this was the third generation; i.e., an intermediate generation was in between. Jehu intended to eliminate Ahab's family. The 70 sons represent the 70 cardinals in the Catholic Church, the highest echelon under the pope. The number 70 is important because the Catholic Church copied the Sanhedrin. Of course Pope John Paul greatly increased the number of cardinals, but the historical number is 70, for 70 was considered the ideal number of active cardinals representing the Catholic Church. The cardinals elect the pope from among themselves. Similarly, the succeeding kings of Israel would be "sons" of Ahab or Jehoram, all things being equal.

Jehu had just slain kings Jehoram and Ahaziah and encouraged the eunuchs to throw Jezebel out the window, resulting in her death. With regard to the 70 sons of Ahab, he now sent letters to rulers, elders, and those who were raising Ahab's children. His instruction was to select the best of the sons and fight in warfare for the rulership of the kingdom. But the rulers and elders were fearful for their own lives, since Jehu had killed the former King Jehoram. Hence they said they were Jehu's servants and would not make a king of one of Ahab's sons. They added, "We ... will do all that thou shalt bid us; ... do thou that which is good in thine eyes."

2 Kings 10:6 Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by tomorrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up.

2 Kings 10:7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel.

2 Kings 10:8 And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning.

2 Kings 10:9 And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these?

2 Kings 10:10 Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah.

2 Kings 10:11 So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

Jehu wrote a second letter, telling the rulers and elders to behead the 70 sons. They cooperated diligently, for they realized that if they did not obey, their own heads would be involved. The heads were piled in two heaps at the city gate. Then Jehu reasoned with the people, attributing the death of the 70 sons not to himself but to the elders and rulers. Next he did a *thorough*

housecleaning, killing *all* who remained of the house of Ahab, and again he brought in *Elijah*, remembering what the prophet had said in the days of Ahab. Jehu and Bidkar, his captain, were leaders under Ahab and remained through and beyond Jehoram.

Formerly Jehu *supported* Ahab and Jezebel—the old dynasty—but later he turned against them. This change in loyalty shows that the element which overthrows Papacy will have previously supported that system. In other words, the ten kings will first *support* the beast, but later they will *hate* the whore; the *same* ten powers will change their affection.

Comment: 2 Kings 9:26 says that not only Naboth but also his sons were killed by Ahab.

Reply: Yes, the heirs were killed as well, for they would have inherited the vineyard upon Naboth's death. In their absence, the "court" would decide, and the court was Ahab, the king.

Elijah's prophecy was very prominent—it was remembered—even though he had been translated and was off the scene. It was *Elisha* who sent a son of the prophets to anoint Jehu, but Jehu bypassed him and accredited *Elijah*. Jehu recognized that the son was an instrument of Elijah, who was commissioned to do the anointing way back in 1 Kings 19:15,16. Jehu was more or less saying, "I have an authorization from Elijah to do the slaying." Thus we can see that the hatred of Jehu will be against *false* religion, not true religion. Jehu did not hate Elijah or Elisha or the sons of the prophets, but he was against the prophets of Ahab and Jezebel.

We have stated in the past that when the nominal Church falls, some discrimination will be made between the truly consecrated and the tares. That is one reason why the Great Company will be spared as a whole, even though they will have anxiety and other trouble. They will escape from mystic Babylon just before its fall—as Lot left Sodom just before its destruction.

Q: Please explain again the relationship of the Micaiah type to the slayings of Jehu.

A: The Micaiah account represents what happened in 1799 in regard to the French Revolution. At that time, only Ahab died, not Jehoshaphat or Jezebel. Papacy was humiliated by Napoleon, and Protestantism was elevated, for he tried to be impartial as regards religious worship.

The Jehu type took place three generations later. In that type, both Jehoram and Ahaziah (Papacy and Protestantism, respectively, in the antitype) were slain. However, Ahaziah was not slain immediately after Jehoram, for there was a little time interval. Ahaziah fled and was later slain (2 Kings 9:27).

2 Kings 10:12 And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. And as he was at the shearing house in the way,

2 Kings 10:13 Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen.

2 Kings 10:14 And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, even two and forty men: neither left he any of them.

Jehu met the 42 brethren of King Ahaziah of Judah in the way. When he accosted them and requested their identity, he realized they were the brethren of Ahaziah and had them slain right then and there.

2 Chronicles 22:7-9 reads as follows: "And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to

Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.” These verses give the *sequence* of the slaying of Ahaziah’s 42 brethren and Ahaziah; namely, *the 42 were slain first*. 2 Kings 9:27 just historically comments about Ahaziah’s fleeing, which *later* resulted in his death.

Q: How would that sequence fit the antitype? Ahaziah represents the false prophet, the Protestant *temporal* power, so how can the 42 be slain *first*?

A: There is another problem. The antitype in Revelation 16:13 is the false prophet (for Ahaziah) and the beast (for Jehoram). Revelation 19:20 states that both the beast and the false prophet are symbolically cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, so it is assumed that their destruction will occur about the same time. But we are suggesting that there will be a slight difference in time. One reason for this difference is that Jehu, the king of Israel, will be the power behind the motivation for the ten horns to slay Papacy. Jehu’s slaying work is a *European* setting, but that which happens in Europe will eventually spread to England and then to the United States.

Also, who is the leader in Protestantism? No one. Although there may be a spokesman in the future, that would merely be a convenience. On the other hand, the pope has been the leader of Papacy for centuries. Thus the “head” of Protestantism is not as important. The 42 brethren will be primarily those who participate as ringleaders in the ecumenical movement. *Later* the slaughter will spread to others at a lower echelon.

In God’s mercy, the Great Company will be spared in the fall of Babylon to give time for their development—they will need to wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They will become joyous as they see in the events the fulfillment of prophecy. By accrediting Elijah, Jehu will be sympathetic to him, as well as to Elisha on a secondary level and to the sons of the prophets. Hence discriminations will be made in the Time of Trouble on the nominal system.

Comment: For “brethren,” the NIV has “relatives,” and the RSV has “kinsmen.”

2 Kings 10:15 And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot.

“And when he [Jehu] was departed thence,” he met Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, who was coming to meet him. Jehu greeted Jehonadab and asked, “Is your heart in accord with my heart?” And Jehonadab answered, “It is.” Jehu said, “Then give me your hand.” When Jehonadab held out his hand, Jehu pulled him up into the chariot.

We sense that Jehu and Jehonadab had previously known each other, for there was some recognition. Nevertheless, Jehu wanted to ascertain Jehonadab’s present attitude—did they still have the same rapport as formerly? The answer was yes.

Who does Jehonadab represent in this account? Invariably those who study this type have likened him to an *earthly* class. But in considering this topic, we first need to understand the setting before trying to analyze the representation. Jehonadab was taken up into the chariot

and accompanied Jehu in the furtherance of his mission and subsequent activities.

It is important to note the following point with regard to the stream of time. This event occurred *after* Jehoram, Jezebel, Ahab's 70 sons, Ahaziah's 42 brethren, and Ahaziah had been killed, that is, *after* a large part of mystic Babylon had fallen and been in dissolution. Therefore, Jehonadab cannot represent the Little Flock.

As with many individuals in the Bible, Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, had a second name. He was also called Jonadab. (Similarly, Jehoram had the name Joram as well, that is, the same name but without the "eh.") The faithfulness of the Rechabites, the posterity of Rechab and Jehonadab (or Jonadab), is recorded in the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, as follows:

"The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

"Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.

"Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniyah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites;

"And I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door:

"And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

"But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever:

"Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.

"Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters;

"Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed:

"But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.

"But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.

"Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD.

"The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me.

“I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.

“Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me:

“Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.

“And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you:

“Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.”

Notice that the time slot of this chapter in Jeremiah was during the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, or more than a century *after* the account in 2 Kings 10. While chapter 35 speaks about Jonadab, it is talking about the *past*, for Jaazaniah was now the chief character of the Rechabites. Jaazaniah’s father was Jeremiah, Jeremiah’s father was Habaziniyah, Habaziniyah’s father was Jonadab, and Jonadab’s father was Rechab. Therefore, the account in 2 Kings 10 was roughly four generations earlier.

Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, made those of his household take a vow not to drink wine, build houses, sow seed, and plant or have vineyards but to dwell in tents and be strangers in the land. Many years later the Prophet Jeremiah used this family as an object lesson, contrasting them and their faithfulness with Judah and its unfaithfulness. For generations, the Rechabites were more faithful to Jonadab, an *earthly* being, than Judah was to *Jehovah God*. What a scathing denunciation! At the time Jeremiah gave this illustration, the Rechabites were living in Jerusalem, the heart of Judah, the very city and inhabitants that were being criticized. Thus the Rechabites in Jeremiah’s day were a *living* testimony to the people of Judah.

Comment: The Rechabites sound almost like bedouins.

Reply: Yes, they were tent dwellers and strangers in the land. At that time, they were living on the outskirts of Jerusalem because of fear of the Chaldeans and the Syrians. However, that change of environment did not weaken their vow or change them from their former steadfastness.

2 Kings 10:16 And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.

Jehonadab indicated *approval* of the slaughter wreaked by Jehu: the slayings of King Jehoram of Israel, Jezebel, the 70 sons of Ahab, the 42 brethren of Ahaziah, and King Ahaziah of Judah. Now Jehu invited Jehonadab to accompany him and see his zeal for Jehovah. Jehu had still more to do to fulfill the prophecy of Elijah.

To repeat the question asked earlier, Who does Jehonadab represent? He pictures the Great Company *after* they come out of Babylon; hence they are a *spiritual* class, and Jeremiah 35 is a type of their consecration. Down here on earth, they find no rest, for they desire a more permanent heavenly city.

How interesting! Jehu, the very class that had already destroyed the upper echelon of mystic Babylon in the antitype, will also go deeper into the infrastructure of the whole arrangement—down to the level of the common people, the worshippers.

Comment: According to Young's *Analytical Concordance*, Jehonadab means "JA is liberal." This definition fits the antitype, for the Great Company are a rescued class who are saved by the Lord's *mercy and generosity* and are given a spiritual change. There is no calling to the Great Company class.

2 Kings 10:17 And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.

Some mopping-up operations now took place in Samaria. The death knell was already in existence, for earlier Jehu had slain the 70 sons of Ahab, the potential heirs to the throne. Now, in addition, he slew all who remained in Samaria who were associated with, or related to, Ahab. And again the slaying was "according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to *Elijah*." These were relatives, friends, and supporters of Papacy. Thus Jehonadab was invited into Jehu's chariot while mystic Babylon was *being* destroyed, while it was in the *process* of destruction. The entire false religious system will cease to exist.

2 Kings 10:18 And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.

2 Kings 10:19 Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did it in subtlety, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.

2 Kings 10:20 And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.

2 Kings 10:21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.

2 Kings 10:22 And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments.

2 Kings 10:23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only.

2 Kings 10:24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.

2 Kings 10:25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.

What becomes of intense interest here is that Jehonadab took an active role in connection with gathering the *people*, not the leadership but the common, ordinary *worshippers* of Baal. The

people who had been indoctrinated with false teachings needed a shock to wake them up with regard to the false religion.

As an illustration, when the Communists took over Russia from the czarist regime, they destroyed churches. Idols were smashed and shown to contain papier-mâché, not the relics of saints. The idols were a mockery; there were no bones inside. The Russian Orthodox Church suffered a blow, but what happened? When warfare occurred and the number of dead began to mount, the people wanted some assurance through a religious service. Of course the priesthood was in disfavor at that time, and with an atheistic government taking over, people were afraid to manifest a disposition that seemed to be antagonistic to the young radicals. However, the people wanted their dead to have some kind of sacred burial, so little by little, services were reinstated. First, prayers were said over the graves, but after a while, the people wanted to have buildings. Many of the churches had been confiscated to quarter soldiers or to serve as museums, especially those that contained great works of art. Gradually the Russian Orthodox Church began to function again, and more and more communicants came to worship, although they were usually the older people, who were not that concerned about dying. As long as the churches did not antagonize the government, they were tolerated.

Here, even though Jehoram and Jezebel (Papacy and Catholicism, respectively) had been slain, people remained who had been indoctrinated with the false teachings. Hence they needed to be shocked into realizing their relationship to false worship. Now Jehu came on the scene and pretended he would start the same Baal religion but on a fresh basis. Of course many people still had a desire in their heart to worship something tangible, so they fell prey to Jehu's pretensions. He called a great convention for all such to attend, even from the far outlying districts of the northern kingdom. As the people entered, they were clothed with vestments of Baal. Jehu wanted the convention to look authentic so that the people would not be fearful and suspicious of his real motive. So successful was the ploy that *not one worshipper* of Baal survived. We are reminded of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. All of the tares were destroyed—all false Christian worship. The tares were burned in the parable, whereas the sword was used in the Jehu account, but the principle of destruction was the same in both cases.

Comment: At the time of mystic Babylon's actual fall, the Great Company will be spared if they heed the warning to get out. In another type, two angels rescued Lot and family at the time of Sodom's destruction.

Reply: Yes, there will be an internal screening, for *not one Baal worshipper* was to escape the destruction. From a practical standpoint, Jehonadab will be helpful in knowing those who are sincerely consecrated, even if they are of a secondary class like him. As a class but not necessarily as individuals, the Great Company will escape and survive the fall of Babylon, generally speaking. The Jehu picture shows that, in addition, Jehonadab will have some part in the destruction. The Great Company will be spared because of the sympathy of the Jehu class. Yes, Jehu was determined to fulfill the prophecy of Elijah with respect to the false religion, but he did not intend to destroy those who were sympathetic to Elijah, even though the latter was off the scene.

While we feel Jehonadab is a type, there is another precedent within the same Elijah-Elisha framework. Just as two different personalities represent the Church class, namely, Elijah and Micaiah in the days of kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat, now both Elisha and Jehonadab represent the Great Company with Jehu in the latter days of Jezebel and the reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah.

Q: Does Elisha particularly represent that portion of the Great Company who are informed of present truth in advance and are walking with Elijah (especially with the feet members before

their change)? In contrast, the Jehonadab class, or portion of the Great Company, will be awakened *during the fall of mystic Babylon*.

A: Yes. Elisha has advance understanding of some of the prophecies and sees Elijah go (2 Kings 2:10). The Jehonadab class will get awakened later, during the fall of Babylon; they do not drink intoxicating “wine”; that is, they do not partake of the *false doctrine*. There is true wine and false wine; there is the true vine and the false vine. With regard to Elisha’s request for a portion of the Holy Spirit similar to what Elijah had, the promise was that he would receive the portion *if he saw Elijah go*. With that similar portion of the Holy Spirit would come not only *power* but also *knowledge and understanding*. Thus the Great Company class will become enlightened, as shown in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. The foolish virgins will get the extra oil in their vessels *later*, whereas the wise virgins have the oil *earlier*. The Elisha portion of the Great Company are more or less associated with the Truth movement, and the Jehonadab portion of the Great Company are in Babylon but are not of that disposition or spirit, for they dwell in the outskirts of Jerusalem (Christendom).

Back to 2 Kings 10:18-25. The Baal worshippers were now all assembled, ostensibly awaiting a ceremony to honor their false god. Jehu even performed a sacrifice, a burnt offering, pretending to be very zealous for Baal. The trapped people misunderstood his zeal, which was enthusiasm for exterminating this false religion. At the end of the sacrifice, Jehu said to the 80 appointed men, “Go in and slay all Baal worshippers. Do not let anyone escape, or you will lose your own life.” The men then smote all the worshippers with the sword, “and the guard and the captains cast them out.”

Comment: The end of verse 25 is confusing in the King James. The 80 men were already in the house of Baal, but the account says they “went to the city of the house of Baal.” The Revised Standard is clearer, for it states that they went into the “inner room” of the house of Baal.

Reply: Yes, the Hebrew indicates it would be a sacred enclosure (possibly the priests’ quarters), rather than a “city” as we would understand the word.

2 Kings 10:26 And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them.

2 Kings 10:27 And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day.

2 Kings 10:28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

The images, including the chief image, were burned, and the house of Baal, the purported house of God, was made a latrine. In the antitype, the signification is that the memory of the nominal system will be repugnant. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel, and for these acts, he was commended. However, Jehu as a person was another matter.

2 Kings 10:29 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 Beth-el, and that were in Dan.

2 Kings 10:30 And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.

2 Kings 10:31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

Jehu felt that his commission was finished with the completion of the work of destroying Baal out of Israel, so he ceased the cleanup—both in himself and with the golden calf worship in Dan and Bethel. Hence he continued the mixture of trying to serve God as well as heathen customs, and he “took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart.”

In regard to the sins of Jeroboam, his motivation was to prevent the Israelites from attending the feasts in Jerusalem, as set forth in the Law of Moses; hence he instituted calf worship and services at Dan and Bethel on the same days. The people were in a dilemma—would they attend the ceremonies in the Holy City or the ceremonies in the ten tribes? Peer pressure was applied to keep the people at the services in the northern kingdom and to disassociate themselves from the southern kingdom. Of course the services close to home were more convenient to attend. Jeroboam had no regard for the sanctity of Jerusalem as being the proper place for worship.

Comment: The worship of a golden calf was displeasing to God way back at the beginning of the 40 years in the wilderness, so the Israelites should have known better at this later period in history.

Reply: Yes, if Jehu was familiar with what Moses had done back there—if he really understood the principles of divine government—he should have realized how sinful such worship was. Thus one who is well-intentioned can be used of the Lord but not have full approval.

Q: In the last study, it was said that Jehu represents a class against false Christendom who will be instrumental in its destruction. Many years ago Jehu was defined as a communistic element within Christendom. Is this latter thought still correct?

A: Calling Jehu a communistic element in Christendom was a convenient, simplistic term to use at the time when there was not sufficient understanding through *Bible* study even of the type. Some groundwork had to be laid first, so that confusion would not add to confusion. As time has passed, more interest has developed in end-of-the-age prophecy, and some brethren feel the urgency of being better informed. Therefore, the thought of Jehu’s being a communistic element should now be dropped.

We have used the illustration of how in high school, we diligently studied chemistry and physics, but when we went to college, we found all sorts of exceptions to the rules previously learned. At first, the discrepancies, exclusions, and exceptions were disheartening, but on further reflection, we realized that some structure was needed first in order to even begin to understand. For example, it would be impossible to jump immediately to calculus and expect to understand it. A person first needs to master arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry.

In summary, Elijah is a *profound* type. Therefore, the personalities and events connected with his life merit much deep and prayerful study. One clue is the statement of Jesus that “Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things,” followed by the mention of John the Baptist’s role (Matt. 17:11-13). We present our thoughts on Elijah as reasonable deductions, but each person must search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so (1 Thess. 5:21; Acts 17:11).

Q: In the type, has Jehonadab now passed off the scene?

A: The Scriptures are silent, but we would assume so.

2 Kings 10:32 In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel;

2 Kings 10:33 From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.

2 Kings 10:34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 Kings 10:35 And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 10:36 And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years.

“In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel.” *While the other events were going on*, the prophecy concerning Hazael gathered momentum and importance. Again the setting was Ramoth-gilead. (The “land of Gilead,” the land of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and one half of the Manassites, as well as Aroer, the river Arnon, Gilead, and Bashan, were all people or locations east of the Jordan River.) These 2 1/2 tribes had wanted to take up residence on the east side of Jordan, and the Lord allowed this request as long as the men participated in liberating the Promised Land. Then they could return to their wives across Jordan. Thus the 2 1/2 tribes were deeded this property in the days of Moses’ declining years and Joshua’s entering the land.

In the antitype, these countries were behind the Iron Curtain until recently. They acted like a buffer zone between the Western European powers of West Germany, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, France, Italy, and Portugal on the one hand, and Russia on the other hand. Thus the “buffer zone” countries were East Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Albania, Estonia, and Lithuania. The Western powers are supported by arms treaties through NATO and nuclear power from the United States. Basically, America has been the barrier against Russia and its nuclear weapons.

In the last year or two, there has been a liberalization attempt in Russia because of the peoples’ disenchantment with communism. The West is elated, thinking that arms treaties will follow with a reduction in the defense budget. Then the saved money could go to help those countries that were freed from communism. But even though money is doled out in the billions, the formerly communist countries in Europe do not have the coordination to democratize society, so there is a disenchantment. Some think conditions were better under communist subjection.

Thus we feel there will be a backlash, and the bulk of contention is these little states, or countries, which are mostly Catholic. The Papacy is working tooth and nail behind the scenes to bring these countries under democracy because that would enhance its power and influence even more. Papacy would then wield greater clout and be able to put more pressure on the United States economically and otherwise. And that influence is already happening. For example, this country has forgiven 75 percent of the huge national debt it is owed by Poland. Other nations such as Argentina and Brazil will feel entitled to the same forgiveness. But in back of this forgiveness is the idea, fantasy, or desire of some for a reestablishment of the Holy Roman Empire—the “good old days” of the Middle Ages. (They were “good” for those of the upper crust but not for the vast majority who were suppressed under the feudal system.)

In the prophecy and type of Elijah, the three who were anointed were Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha. Hazael was in the picture earlier in the sense that when the kings of Israel and Judah went to fight at Ramoth-gilead, they did not defeat the Syrian power, although Ahab died in the battle. Not much more is heard about the Syrian power until verses 32 and 33 of this chapter. “In

those days,” Hazael again began to make an incursion into the buffer states—“from Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead ... from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.” “*All the land of Gilead*” is a lot of territory.

In current events today, Hazael is rising on the horizon, as we would expect, for Russia will invade Europe. One of the first goals will be to reclaim the formerly communist countries, but Russia will not stop there. The conflict will continue, including a sacking of the Vatican, until God puts hooks into Gog’s jaws and pulls him back to go down to Israel at the very end of the age with regard to Jacob’s Trouble (Ezek. 38:4). If our understanding is correct, these events will occur in the future.

Q: By the term “in those days,” is the thought that simultaneously with some of the destruction of the tares going on in Christendom by the Jehu element, Hazael will *start* to make these incursions?

A: Yes, but Hazael’s activity will continue beyond Jehu’s. Hazael’s star will start to rise at that time, for Syria is the evil axe, or power, in the hands of the Lord. For a while, Syria will prosper in going down to Israel and wreaking destruction. Syria, Assyria, and Gog are synonymous in prophecy.

Jehu does not represent Russia but those who are sympathetic to Russian thinking in their *hatred of religious systems*, especially Papacy and Roman Catholicism. The Russian Orthodox Church came back into favor in Russia because it knew its place and cooperated with the Communist Party and did not have ambitions of overthrowing it. Ever since World War I, Russia has been suspicious of Roman Catholicism and the Vatican. Gorbachev’s going to the pope is a facade; it is pure politics. Russia has long-term goals and will invade Europe.

The experiences of Elijah cover the Little Flock from AD 539 to its completion. This is a very comprehensive type with the 1,260 days; Elijah’s vision at Mount Sinai; the calling of Elisha; Elijah’s going to Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan; his smiting and crossing the Jordan River; and his being taken up in a whirlwind. Then Elisha carries on, and the anointings of Hazael and Jehu take place.

“Jehu slept with his fathers” and was buried in Samaria. He died after reigning for 28 years, and his son Jehoahaz succeeded him.

2 Kings 11:1 And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

2 Kings 11:2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king’s sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

2 Kings 11:3 And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

Athaliah was the mother of King Ahaziah, who was slain by Jehu. When she saw that her son was dead, she killed all the heirs—her *own grandchildren!* The exception was the one-year-old Joash, whom Jehosheba hid, along with his nurse, so that he would not be slain. Jehosheba was the daughter of King Jehoram and the sister of King Ahaziah. In other words, Jehosheba, a sister of Ahaziah, hid Joash and his nurse to protect them from Athaliah, the grandmother.

Comment: What an evil, evil person Athaliah was!

Reply: Yes, she reminds us of Jezebel, to whom she was related by a mixed marriage. The two were similar in character.

Comment: Jehu had also slain Ahaziah's 42 "brethren" (2 Kings 10:12-14). If these individuals were actual brothers of Ahaziah, there would have been a great number of grandchildren, and Athaliah could easily have overlooked one of them.

Reply: Yes, with so many potential heirs, Athaliah could have lost sight of one who was missing, especially if more than one person was involved in the assassinations at her direction.

Jehosheba hid Joash in a "bedchamber" in the "house of the LORD," the Temple. The bedchamber could have been in the side of the structure. Just as in Ezekiel's Temple in the future, small rooms were in the sides of Solomon's Temple. For six years, Joash was hidden in the Temple precincts, and meanwhile, Athaliah was reigning.

Comment: Jehosheba was brave to hide Joash, for if discovered, Athaliah would have killed her too.

Reply: Yes, Jehosheba would have been considered a traitor.

2 Kings 11:4 And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son.

2 Kings 11:5 And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house;

2 Kings 11:6 And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.

2 Kings 11:7 And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.

2 Kings 11:8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.

Jehoiada was the high priest. For him to give this counsel to the rulers put him at great risk if Queen Athaliah found out about it, but he acted courageously in the seventh year of her reign. (Jehoiada had to wait seven years because Joash was so young and perhaps also because time was needed to reveal Athaliah's evil character.) Jehoiada commanded rulers and captains to act as bodyguards, for if one or two of them disclosed that Joash was indeed alive and could replace Athaliah, the boy's life would be in danger.

Comment: A *Reprint* article states that it was wisdom for Jehoiada to use the sabbath day, for with all the people coming to Jerusalem, the rulers and captains congregating at the Temple would not be conspicuous.

Reply: Yes, and there were restrictions as to how far into the Temple precincts a woman and the rulers could go.

Thus Jehoiada took a bold step in giving this counsel, and the rulers and captains responded favorably. He had different shifts for the bodyguards so that there was a rotating staff and no one worked 24 hours a day in this protection procedure.

2 Kings 11:9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

2 Kings 11:10 And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the LORD.

2 Kings 11:11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple.

2 Kings 11:12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

The expression "God save the king" originated here with the recognition of Joash.

Comment: Joash was only seven years old (see verse 21). The crown was put on this *little boy*, and he was anointed with *adults* clapping their hands and saying, "God save the king."

2 Kings 11:13 And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD.

2 Kings 11:14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

2 Kings 11:15 But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 11:16 And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

Many years earlier, Solomon had built a headquarters for his palace in the southern part of the Old City down by the King's Garden. With the headquarters being down low, Queen Athaliah could hear the commotion up the hill where the people were acclaiming Joash as king.

Comment: What hypocrisy for Athaliah to cry, "Treason, Treason," after the way she had obtained the throne!

To have captains of hundreds was a custom in Jewry as well as with the Roman centurions. (A centurion was over 100 people.)

Q: Verse 14 reads, "Behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king." Where did this take place?

A: Joash stood by a pillar in the inner court of Solomon's Temple. Between the altar and the

Temple were two large pillars: Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings 7:21). The king stood there and took the oath of office with the holy Scriptures in his hand.

Comment: Considering the youth of Joash, the writer was very respectful in not calling him “the boy king,” for example. The Law required the people to respect the *office* of king.

The rejoicing of the people suggests that there was dissatisfaction with the reign of Athaliah. Jehoiada’s instruction was not to slay her within the Temple precincts, so even though the slaying was justifiable, it was done outside by the way of the Horse Gate. She probably realized what was happening and was fleeing for safety when she was apprehended and slain.

2 Kings 11:17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD’S people; between the king also and the people.

2 Kings 11:18 And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 11:19 And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king’s house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.

2 Kings 11:20 And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king’s house.

2 Kings 11:21 Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

Comment: We can picture the seven-year-old king sitting on the *great big throne*.

Reply: Joash was just old enough to have some memory of this event and the acclaim of the people. Jehoiada had great administrative capabilities and a good sense of timing for the coronation ceremony. Everything was in order and was carried out according to his instructions.

When the covenant was being made between the king and the nation and God, Jehoiada was there to surety it. The king, the priest, the people, and God formed a little circle, as it were. Joash was proclaimed the rightful heir to the throne, and “all the people of the land rejoiced.”

Comment: The king’s name is spelled two different ways in this chapter: Joash and Jehoash.

Reply: Joash, the shortened version, was like a nickname. Similarly, King Tutankhamen was shortened to King Tut.

Comment: Verse 21 reads, “Seven years old was Jehoash when he *began to reign*.” Joash occupied the throne, but he was not old enough to reign and make decisions on his own.

Reply: We can be sure that Jehoiada, the high priest, was nearby to counsel and advise Joash until he matured.

2 Kings 12:1 In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

2 Kings 12:2 And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

2 Kings 12:3 But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

Comment: Joash got a better report than some of the kings who were more mature when they started to reign.

Reply: Yes, Joash reigned for 40 years, and overall, he got a good report. Jehoiada's good counseling helped Joash perform his office properly. The only criticism here was that the high places in the suburbs were not taken away; there the people still sacrificed and burned incense to false gods. For the most part, the Israelites occupied the hilly places of the land.

2 Kings 12:4 And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,

2 Kings 12:5 Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.

2 Kings 12:6 But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

Joash told the priests to use voluntary freewill offerings, plus a set amount (a toll, or fee) assessed to each man, to repair breaches in the Temple; that is, the money was to be used for maintenance and reparation work. However, by the twenty-third year of Joash's reign, the priests still had not repaired the Temple.

2 Kings 12:7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

2 Kings 12:8 And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

2 Kings 12:9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 12:10 And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 12:11 And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD,

2 Kings 12:12 And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.

2 Kings 12:13 Howbeit there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the LORD:

2 Kings 12:14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 12:15 Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.

2 Kings 12:16 The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests’.

Comment: 2 Chronicles 24:7 tells why the Temple was not repaired. “For 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.”

Reply: Athaliah’s sons not only put their hands in the till and robbed the Temple of funds but also used the money for Baalim worship, and the money had to be replenished. King Joash was concerned about maintenance of the Temple—and rightly so. Jehoiada, the high priest, was very concerned about the civil and the ecclesiastical office and the moral code, but he did not have much administrative ability for maintenance work. Therefore, the push from Joash was needed. Eventually, enough funds were collected, and the Temple repairs were made.

2 Kings 12:17 Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.

2 Kings 12:18 And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king’s house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.

Gath was a Philistine city on the Mediterranean coast. Hazael, the king of Syria, fought against Gath and defeated it. Then he “set his face to go up to Jerusalem.” Fearing Hazael, Joash sent him all the dedicated things that the kings of four generations had given. In essence, this was a bribe to pacify Hazael, and it was effective, for Hazael returned to Syria.

Joash had just made sure the Temple was repaired, or “constructed.” Then along came Hazael with the intention of “destructing” it. Feeling that the king of Syria was too well equipped militarily for Judah to resist him, Joash thought it was expedient to pay a bribe and spare the Temple. The Bible does not say that the Lord reprimanded Joash for this act.

2 Kings 12:19 And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 12:20 And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla.

2 Kings 12:21 For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Joash was assassinated by his own servants after reigning for 40 years. His son Amaziah

reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 10:31-33,35 reads as follows. “But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin. In those days [therefore] the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.... And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.” In other words, in Jehu’s latter days, Hazael was anointed to do a work of “cut[ting] Israel short.” Syria invaded Ramoth-gilead, which was occupied by Reuben, Gad, and one half of Manasseh, and exercised control over it.

2 Kings 13:1 In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years.

2 Kings 13:2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

2 Kings 13:3 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all their days.

2 Kings 13:4 And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.

2 Kings 13:5 (And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime.)

2 Kings 13:6 Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.)

2 Kings 13:7 Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing.

Jehoahaz succeeded Jehu as the king of Israel, the northern kingdom. Because Jehoahaz was evil, God delivered the ten tribes into the hand of Hazael, the king of Syria, and his son Ben-hadad. When Jehoahaz besought the Lord, a deliverer was sent. Nevertheless, the people continued to sin, so God left them only a police guard, as it were, of 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 footmen. They were reduced to “dust.” Incidentally, Hazael, Ben-hadad, Pharaoh, Herod, and Caesar were all titles of office. Therefore, when “Hazael” was mentioned, the reference was not necessarily to the same individual.

2 Kings 13:8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 Kings 13:9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.

When Jehoahaz died, Joash (Jehoash) reigned over Israel, the northern kingdom.

2 Kings 13:10 In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years.

2 Kings 13:11 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: but he walked therein.

2 Kings 13:12 And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 Kings 13:13 And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Joash, of the ten tribes, was an evil king. When he died, Jeroboam succeeded him and sat on the throne. The duplication of names continued. For a time, there was an overlapping of a King Joash of Judah and a King Joash of Israel. The sequence of four kings of Israel was Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash, and Jeroboam.

2 Kings 13:14 Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

2 Kings 13:15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.

2 Kings 13:16 And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

2 Kings 13:17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.

2 Kings 13:18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.

2 Kings 13:19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.

Now Elisha was suddenly brought into the account again. In this confused picture, we do not have the capability of sorting out all these details from a prophetic standpoint, but we can see that after Elijah was translated, Elisha remained behind for quite a long time.

When Elisha got sick, King Joash of Israel came down and wept over him, saying, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Joash recognized that Elisha had taken over the role of prophet when Elijah left the scene. (Elisha had uttered similar words at the time of Elijah's translation: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof"—2 Kings 2:12.) Elisha had directly anointed Hazael to be king over Syria, and he had indirectly anointed Jehu through one of the sons of the prophets.

Elisha told Joash to take a bow and arrows. When Joash put his hands on the bow, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands and said, "Open the window eastward." Joash did and then shot an arrow when instructed to do so. As the arrow went, Elisha said, "The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for you shall smite the Syrians in Aphek

until you have consumed them.”

Next Elisha told Joash to smite the ground with the arrows. Joash struck the ground three times. In anger and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Elisha said, “You should have smitten the ground five or six times. Then you would have smitten Syria until you consumed it. Now you will smite Syria only three times.” Obviously, there is some antitypical significance that will clarify in due time. It is interesting that Elisha was dying when this incident occurred.

Comment: In a prior study, it was suggested that Elisha represents the Great Company here and that the three smitings are World Wars I, II, and III. The mention of “eastward” in verse 17 shows that the problem will be to the east with “Syria,” or Russia, threatening Christendom.

Reply: Syria’s being northeast of Israel pictures Russia’s involvement, among other things.

Comment: It would seem that Christendom bears a responsibility for not having destroyed an atheistic power.

Reply: Yes, there is responsibility for not dealing with the problem with finality.

Comment: With each of the World Wars, concessions were made with Russia.

Reply: And that is happening in the war today between the United States and Iraq. Restrictions and strings were attached so that Saddam Hussein could not be destroyed no matter how evil he was. Our forces were prevented from capturing Baghdad, which could have been taken in another 24 hours. Then Saddam would have been deposed. Despite the moral issue, the war was cut short for *political expediency*. We supposedly entered the war on a moral basis to stop “naked aggression,” but since the United Nations gave authority to only push Saddam back to his own land, that is all we did. We are living in a day of compromise, concession, and political stratagem. The United States is going downhill because of laws that are being passed. People are trying to *legislate* righteousness, but that will not work because *action* is needed. The Kingdom is greatly needed with an authoritative voice to instruct in simple, understandable language what is right and how to do it. Superhuman intelligence is required because of the morass we are in.

2 Kings 13:20 And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

2 Kings 13:21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

Elisha died and was buried. When another man was being buried, he was cast into Elisha’s grave. As the dead body touched Elisha’s bones, the man was resuscitated and stood up on his feet. What is the antitype?

Comment: When the Great Company goes off the scene, Jesus’ blood will no longer be mortgaged. Then the blood can be applied to the world of mankind.

Reply: Yes, this was an unusual feature of the Pastor’s reasoning. He said that after Jesus’ death and resurrection, the blood was not paid over to Justice but was secured, put on deposit. From that deposit, the ransom merit was imputed, or mortgaged, as a covering to the consecrated down through the Gospel Age. When the Little Flock and the Great Company—the “church of the firstborn”—are finished, the money on deposit will be free to be applied on

behalf of mankind (Heb. 12:23).

In verses 17-19, read earlier, the dying Elisha asked the king to draw a bow. When the king used his strength to pull the bow, the prophet put his hands on the king's hands and said, "This arrow, which will be shot to the east, will be the *arrow of the LORD's deliverance*." In the type, the deliverance came after the three smitings. In the antitype, it will occur when God saves Jacob out of his trouble, that is, when God fights for His people as He did in days of old (Jer. 30:7; Zech. 14:3).

Verse 21 tells about the revival, or resuscitation, of a deceased individual when his corpse touched the bones of Elisha. The Greek prefix *ana* can mean either to fall down or to rise up depending on context. For example, at the time of the Last Supper, it pertained to reclining at the table to eat. However, in connection with the resurrection, the Greek *anastasis* was a standing up. Resuscitation is the *beginning* of the standing-up process, which is a gradual lifting up until full resurrection and eventual testing take place at the end of the Millennial Age. The individual in verse 21 revived and "stood up on his feet"; in the antitype, this process will start with resuscitation and end with *anastasis*.

2 Kings 13:22 But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

2 Kings 13:23 And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.

2 Kings 13:24 So Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 13:25 And 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.

The several Ben-hadads and Hazael in Scripture show that different personalities occupied the office of king. The same problem of confusion with name duplications that occurred in Israel also happened in other nations. For example, there were multiple Herods, so a further distinguishing name such as Agrippa was needed to distinguish which Herod. The Lord's hand was in this repetition to help slow down the growth of knowledge. While contemporaries knew the identity of the Herod, Pharaoh, Czar, etc., there was confusion with succeeding generations later on in history. Had the lineages all been laid out systematically, the knowledge of history would be much better understood and appreciated. Moreover, the beauty and accuracy of the Bible would be clearly seen. Instead only those who appreciate Scripture can make some sense out of the confusion. Thus the confusion was providential to deter the increase of light and understanding until the Kingdom Age.

2 Kings 14:1 In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah.

2 Kings 14:2 He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

2 Kings 14:3 And 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.

2 Kings 14:4 Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.

Verses 1-4 tell us that Amaziah reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. He was a good king in a modified sense, for he left the “high places” with statues of heathen gods and goddesses. In other words, he was as good a king as could be expected under the circumstances of the mixed marriage relationship between Israel and Judah. The influence of Jezebel continued for a number of generations.

The mention of two Joashes in verse 1 can be confusing. One was of the northern kingdom, and the other was of the southern kingdom.

2 Kings 14:5 And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his father.

2 Kings 14:6 But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

2 Kings 14:7 He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

As soon as Amaziah was confirmed in his kingdom, he killed the servants who had slain his father, the king. But he obeyed the Law by not killing the servants’ children. “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).

Selah (or Sela) was Petra. Edom was on the east side of the “valley of salt,” the Dead Sea. This land was fertile when Lot chose it, that is, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha and the formation of the Dead Sea (Gen. 13:5-11). Following the earthquake, the land was called the “valley of salt.” Basically speaking, Edom was on the southern end of the Dead Sea on the far side.

Comment: Amaziah “took Selah by war, and called ... it Joktheel unto this day.” According to Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, Joktheel means “God’s reward of victory.”

2 Kings 14:8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face.

2 Kings 14:9 And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

2 Kings 14:10 Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?

2 Kings 14:11 But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah.

2 Kings 14:12 And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents.

2 Kings 14:13 And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

2 Kings 14:14 And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

What does the expression mean where Amaziah, the king of Judah, said to Joash, the king of Israel, "Come, let us look one another in the face"?

Background information in 2 Chronicles gives sense to the expression, as follows:

"Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of their fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield.

"He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for an hundred talents of silver.

"But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the LORD is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim.

"But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down.

"And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.

"Then Amaziah separated them, to wit, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again: wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

"And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people, and went to the valley of salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand.

"And other ten thousand left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken in pieces.

"But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.

"Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them.

"Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?

"And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I

know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.

“Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us see one another in the face.

“And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast ... and trode down the thistle.” (2 Chron. 25:5-18)

Thus Amaziah numbered 300,000 men in Judah who were able to go to war. He also hired 100,000 soldiers out of Israel for 100 talents of silver. But a prophet told him not to take the Israelites, for God was not with them. When Amaziah sent the 100,000 back to the ten tribes, they considered this act an insult, and “their anger was greatly kindled against Judah.” Amaziah was subsequently successful in warfare against Edom, which was located in the valley of salt, and brought back their heathen gods and worshipped them. Meanwhile, the 100,000 soldiers of Israel whom Amaziah had sent back returned to Judah and conquered some of the cities and took “much spoil.” Then a prophet of the Lord said that because God was displeased with regard to the heathen gods, Amaziah would be destroyed.

At that point, Amaziah sent to Joash, the king of Israel, and said, “Come, let us see one another in the face.” In other words, Amaziah, the king of Judah, challenged Joash, the king of Israel, to battle. Joash replied with a parable likening Amaziah to a little thistle on the end of a fir tree that was to be trampled. Hence a battle was set up between the northern and southern kingdoms.

In sending the 100,000 men back to Israel, Amaziah properly obeyed the man of God, but he was wrong to boast about his victory over Edom, for *God* had given that victory for Amaziah’s obedience. Moreover, Amaziah’s challenge to the king of Israel did not have God’s approval, so he would lose the battle. In fact, Joash greatly humbled Amaziah by capturing him and then going to Jerusalem and taking treasures out of the Temple and the king’s palace and transporting them back to Samaria. In other words, Jerusalem was looted.

2 Kings 14:15 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 Kings 14:16 And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

Joash of Israel died, and his son Jeroboam II reigned in his stead. (Much earlier Jeroboam I was the first king of the ten-tribe kingdom.) Verse 15 cross-references “the book of the chronicles,” a large excerpt of which was just read.

2 Kings 14:17 And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.

2 Kings 14:18 And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 14:19 Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.

2 Kings 14:20 And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his

fathers in the city of David.

Amaziah was slain in Lachish by a conspiracy.

2 Kings 14:21 And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.

2 Kings 14:22 He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

After Amaziah died, his son Azariah (also called Uzziah) was made king of Judah at the young age of 16. Azariah built Elath, that is, Eilat, a port city at the northern end of the Gulf of Eilat (or Aqaba). Since Amaziah had defeated Edom, which at that time extended from the southern end of the Dead Sea all the way down to the port of Aqaba, it was logical for his son, the next king of Judah, to build the port city of Eilat. Ezion-geber is next to Eilat.

Comment: King Uzziah is mentioned in Amos 1:1 and Zechariah 14:5. The *literal* earthquake that occurred during this king's reign confirms that the future earthquake which splits the Mount of Olives will also be *literal*.

Reply: Yes. Incidentally, an earthquake zone called the Palestinian (or Great) Rift extends from the Mountain of the Moon in northern Africa (Ethiopia) all the way up to Mount Ararat.

2 Kings 14:23 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.

2 Kings 14:24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

2 Kings 14:25 He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher.

2 Kings 14:26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.

2 Kings 14:27 And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

Jeroboam II reigned over Israel for 41 years and was evil, for he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam I, his predecessor. "He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath [which was way up on the northern border of Israel] unto the sea [the Dead Sea] of the plain." In other words, Jeroboam II consolidated the authority of the northern kingdom from Hamath in the north to the Dead Sea, which was close to Judah.

This restoration was done "according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher." This Jonah was the prophet of the Book of Jonah.

Comment: Gath-hepher was in Galilee, and one reason the Pharisees did not accept Jesus as the Messiah was that he came from Galilee. In John 7:52, the Pharisees said to Nicodemus, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Had they known the Scriptures, they would have thought of Jonah and not made that statement. (See also John

1:46 and 7:41.)

God was merciful to Israel because of the grievous affliction and servitude the people had to bear. He would not “blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.” In other words, this Jeroboam was used to break a yoke of servitude.

2 Kings 14:28 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 Kings 14:29 And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

Jeroboam died, and his son Zachariah succeeded him as the king of Israel.

2 Kings 15:1 In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.

2 Kings 15:2 Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.

2 Kings 15:3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;

2 Kings 15:4 Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places.

Azariah (Uzziah) reigned for 52 years, which was one of the longest reigns in the history of Israel and Judah. These verses are mostly a repeat of information presented earlier. Generally speaking, his reign had God’s approval, but he did not remove the high places. This condition continued until King Hezekiah.

2 Kings 15:5 And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king’s son was over the house, judging the people of the land.

2 Kings 15:6 And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 15:7 So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

Verses 1-7 cover the 52 years of Uzziah’s reign, providing a scarcity of information. God punished him with leprosy so that he was a leper until his death. The account in 2 Chronicles 26:16-21 fills in some of the details leading up to the leprosy, as follows:

“But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

“And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:

“And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

“Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

“And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

“And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.”

In spite of this act, for which he was punished, King Uzziah got a good report overall. He presumed to enter the Holy to burn incense, which only the priests were authorized to do. The *high priest, plus 80 priests, withstood Uzziah and warned him not to burn incense. But he got angry, and during his anger, leprosy rose up in his forehead. Not only was Uzziah thrust out, but he hastened to go. And he dwelled in a separate house, being a leper until his death.*

Comment: We know that Uzziah had the bad kind of leprosy because he had to live in isolation.

Reply: Yes, and the leprosy was in his forehead. Probably the jaws of the high priest and the 80 priests dropped when they saw the leprosy.

Q: Would this incident tie in with how a person got into the guest chamber without a wedding garment, or robe (Matt. 22:11-13)? In both cases, there was presumption.

A: In the parable, the king asked, “Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?” Yes, this entering was presumptuous over a period of time whether or not the individual recognized his conduct as such. The act was improper in connection with what the individual was purporting to be.

Uzziah’s hastening to leave the Holy shows that the leprosy caused him to realize his guilt. There is great sensitivity during a certain stage of leprosy, but later on there is a numbness. Both conditions have a spiritual application. Numbness indicates a conscience that has been defiled to the point of becoming “seared.” It is like a piece of hard, dried leather that is not sensitive to feeling, whereas moist, tender flesh is very sensitive, so that even a hair is felt. In the antitype, the lump, spot, and hair of leprosy all have significance with regard to *degrees* of sin (Leviticus 13 and 14).

Incidentally, when we were on one of the tours to the Middle East, we inspected two tombs in the Jerusalem area to ascertain which was the true sepulchre our Lord was buried in. Of course we did not believe it was the site that is traditionally honored as the sepulchre where Jesus’ body was laid, for there are many evidences that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a fraud. Historically speaking, only two tombs fit the description of the New Testament of being near where Jesus was crucified. Of the two, we believe Gordon’s Tomb is the authentic site of the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. When Jesus’ body was removed from the Cross, it was taken to Joseph’s private family sepulchre that is north of Jerusalem and outside the city wall. The other tomb, also north of the city, is just a little west of Gordon’s Tomb, across the Damascus Gate road, and in a convent. Upon inspecting this tomb, we felt King Uzziah had been buried there.

2 Kings 15:8 In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.

2 Kings 15:9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

2 Kings 15:10 And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 15:11 And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

2 Kings 15:12 This was the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass.

King Zachariah of Israel reigned for six months and did evil. He must have been very evil in order to get such a report in only six months. Shallum killed him and reigned in his stead.

God had promised Jehu that his sons would “sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation.” “And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel” (2 Kings 10:30). Zachariah ended the fourth generation of Jehu, for Shallum was of a different lineage.

Comment: A lot of turbulence was occurring among royalty. Zachariah reigned for only six months when Shallum killed him, and Shallum was slain after reigning for only one month.

2 Kings 15:13 Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria.

2 Kings 15:14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 15:15 And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

2 Kings 15:16 Then Menahem smote Tiphsah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up.

Menahem killed Shallum and then reigned over Israel for ten years (see verse 17). Menahem was cruel, as evidenced by his killing pregnant women. Meanwhile, during the reigns of Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, and others, Uzziah of Judah continued his long 52-year reign. For a very short time, Tirzah became the capital of the ten tribes instead of Samaria, yet its archaeological ruins are outstanding.

2 Kings 15:17 In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria.

2 Kings 15:18 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

2 Kings 15:19 And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand.

2 Kings 15:20 And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land.

Pul, the king of Assyria, threatened to invade Israel, but he turned back when Menahem paid him a huge ransom of silver talents that were exacted from all the wealthy men of Israel.

Comment: How often Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, is used as the comparison for sin! He will experience great shame in the Kingdom.

Reply: Among the kings of Israel thus far, both Jeroboam and Ahab were especially notorious for their evil deeds. Even Ahab was compared to Jeroboam, but he added the sin of worshipping Baal (1 Kings 16:30-32).

2 Kings 15:21 And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 Kings 15:22 And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

Menahem died, and his son Pekahiah reigned over Israel in his stead. The chronological links of the reigns of the kings of Israel continue to be filled in.

2 Kings 15:23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.

2 Kings 15:24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

2 Kings 15:25 But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room.

2 Kings 15:26 And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Uzziah was still reigning in Judah. Pekahiah was evil and reigned only two years before being assassinated by a conspiracy led by Pekah, the son of one of the king's captains. The tumult continued among the kings of Israel. Pekah took over the kingship.

2 Kings 15:27 In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years.

2 Kings 15:28 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

2 Kings 15:29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.

2 Kings 15:30 And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

2 Kings 15:31 And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Pekah of Israel did that which was evil. With Tiglath-pileser as king, the Assyrian Empire made frequent intrusions into Israel. He captured cities and territories from Israel, including Gilead and Galilee (all the land of Naphtali), and took the people captive to Assyria.

Hoshea killed Pekah and reigned as the king of Israel. Meanwhile, Jotham, a son of Uzziah, was the king of Judah, for his father had died.

Q: There is a marginal reference to Isaiah 9:1 with regard to Tiglath-pileser and his having conquered the Naphtali region. “Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.” Since Isaiah was a prophet when Tiglath-pileser invaded Israel, does 2 Kings 15:29 refer to this intrusion?

A: Yes. The prophecy of Matthew 4:15,16 quotes Isaiah 9:1 in part with regard to Jesus, for his ministry was in this area. Thus there is a historical connection. “The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.”

2 Kings 15:32 In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign.

2 Kings 15:33 Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

2 Kings 15:34 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

2 Kings 15:35 Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD.

Jotham, king of Judah, got a good overall report but did not remove the high places. This same theme comes through over and over again. Even though some of Judah’s kings were given credit for doing that which was right, they failed to remove these other forms and practices of idolatrous worship.

Comment: If a king was rated “good,” invariably he was a king of Judah.

Reply: Yes, over and over again the kings of Israel were considered “evil.”

2 Kings 15:36 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 15:37 In those days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria,

and Pekah the son of Remaliah.

2 Kings 15:38 And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

In the Judah line, King Jotham died, and his son Ahaz reigned in his stead. Starting with Saul and ending with Zedekiah, the Period of the Kings covered 513 years. Hoshea was the last king of the ten tribes before they were carried away into Assyria.

While the names and lineages of all these kings are somewhat burdensome, they will be important when earth's history is replayed in the next age. The deeds of some of the kings were recorded more specifically with the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In addition, the leading personalities of the world and the history of all nations have been recorded. If man can do such marvelous things with filming and photography because of what God has implanted in the human mind, then God Himself has had agencies down through countless ages keeping a perfect photographic record. History has been recorded for the benefit and education of mankind. These names will take on meaning when the actual personalities come forth from the grave.

2 Kings 16:1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

2 Kings 16:2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

2 Kings 16:3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.

2 Kings 16:4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

Ahaz, the son of Jotham, began to reign over Judah at age 20. He reigned for 16 years and was very evil. His wicked influence adversely affected Judah. 2 Chronicles 28:2,3 tells that he "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel." Thus he even offered his children as sacrifices to the fire god Molech, one of the many forms of Baal worship. A large statue of Molech was just outside Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnom.

2 Kings 16:5 Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.

2 Kings 16:6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

2 Kings 16:7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.

2 Kings 16:8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.

2 Kings 16:9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.

Rezin, the king of Syria, joined with Pekah, the king of Israel, to fight against Ahaz, but they could not overcome Ahaz. Azariah, a previous king of Judah, had captured and restored Elath (Eilat). Now the king of Syria took Eilat back again.

Ahaz joined forces with Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, whose name is sometimes abbreviated as Pul. Ahaz bought Assyria's support with silver and gold from the Temple and the king's house. Tiglath-pileser went up against Damascus and captured it and carried the inhabitants captive to Kir, or Kars, in Turkey. In addition, he slew Rezin, the king of Syria.

The 2 Chronicles account furnishes more information about the evil deeds of Ahaz and the punishments, or judgments, that came upon him, as follows:

“Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.

“For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.

“And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king.

“And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

“But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven.

“And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God?

“Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you.

“Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war,

“And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.

“So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation.

“And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.

“At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him.

“For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives.

“The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there.

“For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD.

“And Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.

“For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the LORD, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.

“And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this is that king Ahaz.

“For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.

“And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

“And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers.” (2 Chron. 28:5-25)

As punishment for the evil deeds committed by King Ahaz, God allowed Pekah and Rezin to kill 120,000 in Judah in one day. Pekah subsequently took 200,000 of Judah captive, but the Prophet Oded said to return them to Judah because Israel had sinned too. Some leaders in Ephraim hearkened to Oded’s words and showed kindness to the captives and returned them to Jericho. Yet for all these experiences, the heart of Ahaz was not softened.

The Kings account gives more emphasis to the ten-tribe kingdom, whereas Chronicles zeros in with a little more detail about the kings of Judah. We need to read both accounts in order to get a fuller understanding.

2 Kings 16:10 And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.

2 Kings 16:11 And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus.

2 Kings 16:12 And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon.

2 Kings 16:13 And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar.

2 Kings 16:14 And he brought also the brasen altar, which was before the LORD, from the

forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar.

Verses 10-14 and subsequent verses tell why the Lord allowed Judah to be taken captive by Samaria, the ten-tribe kingdom. Ahaz flagrantly disobeyed by making some innovations in the Temple services and the Brazen Altar. He had Urijah the priest copy an ornate heathen altar in the house of worship at Damascus and put this new altar in the Temple court in Jerusalem. Not only did he move this unauthorized foreign altar into the primary position, but also he moved the true Brazen Altar, which by divine ordinance was aligned with the forefront of the Holy of Solomon's Temple, to a secondary position.

Comment: Ahaz adopted the heathen altar and sacrificed unto the heathen gods of Damascus because Syria had gained the victory.

Reply: In other words, in addition to being attracted by the beauty of the heathen altar, Ahaz felt that since the Syrian gods seemed to be superior to the God of Israel, he wanted to honor and pay respect to the mightier gods.

2 Kings 16:15 And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire by.

2 Kings 16:16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.

Ahaz added insult to injury. Not only was the new altar given primary importance, but the daily offerings were performed on it instead of the Lord's altar. This deviation is a lesson, too, with regard to the problem of worship down through the age, for man has corrupted the simplicity of the Lord's instructions. The symbolisms of the Tabernacle and the Temple were not meant to be attractive to the worldly mind. In fact, the gold and the furniture (Candlestick, Table of Shewbread, etc.) of the Holy were hidden from the worldly mind, which likes external adornment such as choirs and elaborate buildings.

Not only were the two daily lamb offerings, as instructed by the Law of Moses, made on the new altar but also the king's daily sacrifice. Even though these innovations occurred in Judah, we are reminded of Papacy's additions and traditions. Papacy is pictured by the golden calves in Dan and Bethel and by Jeroboam's weaning the people away from Jerusalem as the center of worship. The same improper spirit prevailed in Papacy, which moved the center of worship from Jerusalem to Rome.

Urijah, a *priest*, wrongly agreed to Ahaz's innovations. His actions show that there was collusion between the king and the priesthood, that is, between "church" and "state." This wrong principle was followed down through the Gospel Age. The civil authority worked hand in glove with the religious authority, with each recognizing the other in its several capacity. Like Urijah, Papacy has followed this evil compromise.

When Ahaz gave Urijah the blueprints of the heathen altar in Damascus, the latter sinned in superintending the making of a duplicate altar for the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. In fact, Urijah expedited the matter so quickly that when Ahaz returned from Damascus, it was already available for offering sacrifices.

Q: Since this incident took place after David's day, was Urijah a son of Zadok?

A: Urijah was a son of Aaron but not necessarily a son of Zadok. And even if Urijah was of Zadok, he was so evil that he could be barred from special service in the Kingdom. At any rate, Urijah should have stood up to Ahaz and refused to cooperate—just as earlier many priests remonstrated with Uzziah (Azariah) and tried to stop him from going into the Holy. Uzziah reacted with anger and, as punishment, became instantly leprous until the day of his death.

Only by understanding the design of the Tabernacle and the Temple can we appreciate the enormity of the sin here. For instance, the Ark of the Covenant, which represented God's throne, was transported by means of a pole, or beam, on the shoulders so that no one would touch it. But what did the pope do? In a *counterfeit* of the Ark of the Covenant, he was carried on his *Sedia Gestatoria*; in being carried in this manner, the pope acted as though he were God. "The LORD ... sitteth between [above] the cherubims [the Ark of the Covenant]" (Psa. 99:1). The point is that unless we are indoctrinated with some understanding of God's Word, we see only the pope's pride in being carried and not the blasphemy.

Also, Ahaz had sort of a covered tramway to go to the Temple; that is, new architecture was added for his pleasure in getting into the inner court in a very convenient way. This addition was a violation that even visiting heathen kings used.

2 Kings 16:17 And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones.

2 Kings 16:18 And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

2 Kings 16:19 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 16:20 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

The huge Laver of Solomon's Temple was removed from the hind parts of the 12 oxen that faced the four points of the compass and put on the ground. What was the reason for this action? Perhaps Ahaz wanted to call more attention to *his* altar.

Comment: The Laver represents the Word of God, so Ahaz emphasized the outward ceremony and demoted the Word of God.

Reply: Yes. In the antitype, the new altar would picture salvation through *man*, whereas the true Brazen Altar represented the sacrifice of *Jesus Christ* for the sin of the world. Papacy's "altar" is the doctrine of the Mass, which diminishes and pushes aside the true sacrifice of Christ; that system instituted the new arrangement of daily propitiation and forgiveness for sin through the Mass.

When *evil* Ahaz died, *good* King Hezekiah, his son, reigned in his stead. Thus we can see that an evil father does not always have an evil son, nor does a good father always have a good son, for there are notable exceptions.

Comment: Isaiah and Micah, the prophets at this time, probably influenced Hezekiah for good.

Reply: Yes. The Book of Isaiah tells of Pekah and Rezin, so it starts a little before this time

period. Parts of Isaiah are repeated almost word for word by Micah, but each had his own individual ministry.

2 Kings 17:1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.

2 Kings 17:2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.

2 Kings 17:3 Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.

2 Kings 17:4 And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

2 Kings 17:5 Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.

Chapter 17 switches the narrative from what was happening in Judah with Judah's king to what was happening in the northern kingdom. Hoshea became the king of Israel, and he was evil. Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, made an incursion into Samaria and besieged it for three years. As will be seen later, this event marked the beginning of the end of the ten tribes, for the northern kingdom would soon be brought into captivity and the land laid waste without inhabitant (except for transplanted Samaritans).

2 Kings 17:6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

2 Kings 17:7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods,

2 Kings 17:8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

2 Kings 17:9 And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

2 Kings 17:10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

2 Kings 17:11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

2 Kings 17:12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

In the ninth year of Hoshea, which followed six years and then three years of captivity, the king of Assyria took captives from Israel into a land that was quite distant from the homeland.

This was one of the first captivities of the northern kingdom.

2 Kings 17:13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

2 Kings 17:14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

2 Kings 17:15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

2 Kings 17:16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

2 Kings 17:17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

What a terrible condition is being summarized here! Chapter 17 is slanted to the sins of the northern kingdom. The chief religious ordinances were predicated on the practices of the heathen. God gave opportunity for change and repentance by sending prophets, but the people ignored their messages and followed vanity and the ways of the *heathen*. The ten tribes would soon receive the final penalty of utter rejection and be taken out of the land.

Hoshea was evil, as were some of the other kings, but we think of Ahab and Jezebel as being the worst because *both* were so evil and their influence was so pervasive. In fact, they are considered more or less the founders of the northern kingdom—more than Jeroboam in a way, even though his sins with the two golden calves continued. Catholicism looks back to the glory of the Holy Roman Empire as the “good old days” when church and state reigned harmoniously. The leadership secretly hopes for a reoccurrence. The desire is for Catholicism to be a worldwide church with a powerful influence over secular authority and all other religions under its control. History has a tendency to repeat itself in a remarkable way, and no doubt that will be true with regard to Papacy’s having a brief rise to power at the end of the Gospel Age.

2 Kings 17:18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

2 Kings 17:19 Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

2 Kings 17:20 And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

2 Kings 17:21 For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin.

2 Kings 17:22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;

2 Kings 17:23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

The removal of the ten tribes was a *process*, with Tiglath-pileser being the first of several parties who were involved. Waves of captives were taken until all were removed from the land.

2 Kings 17:24 And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.

2 Kings 17:25 And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them.

2 Kings 17:26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land.

Verses 24-26 describe the beginning of the Samaritans. When the people of the ten tribes were all removed from the land, the king of Assyria brought alien people from Babylon and other places and settled them in Samaria and gave them the name "Samaritans." But because these newcomers did not worship the God of Israel, lions were sent among them. (We are reminded of the time when the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines and many problems developed subsequently among the captors.) The people got the lesson and told the king of Assyria, who then commanded that an Israelite priest be taken back to Samaria to teach the newcomers about God. The result was a mixture of the true religion of the land and false heathen worship. Many years later Jesus spoke about the Samaritans (Matt. 10:5; John 4:9). They ostensibly worshipped God but kept their heathen gods and practices.

Comment: In John 4:12, the woman of Samaria asked Jesus, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?"

Reply: Since Jacob was a Syrian, the Samaritans looked back to him as a "father" and thus considered their religion legitimate.

2 Kings 17:27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.

2 Kings 17:28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

2 Kings 17:29 Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

2 Kings 17:30 And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima,

2 Kings 17:31 And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

2 Kings 17:32 So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.

Comment: It is interesting that the king of Assyria honored the request of the Samaritans. Apparently, because of the type, the Lord wanted a priest to go back, and a *mixed* worship was the result—half Israelitish and half heathen practices.

Reply: Yes, a priest was sent back to pacify the foreign element that had taken over the land.

2 Kings 17:33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.

2 Kings 17:34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;

2 Kings 17:35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them:

2 Kings 17:36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

2 Kings 17:37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.

2 Kings 17:38 And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods.

2 Kings 17:39 But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.

2 Kings 17:40 Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.

2 Kings 17:41 So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

“So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images” at the same time. In principle, the Samaritans had a “form of godliness” but denied the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5). They did not astutely consider every commandment of the Lord but gave the commandments only a *general* recognition. They recognized their *own* thinking as equal or more important.

The permission of evil has been a great test on Christians down through the age. God has been quiet, just letting things happen for the most part, but certainly the Bible spells out what should and should not be done. With the Lord sitting back, the people have shown their true character by bringing in their own practices and going astray. One test for the Christian is to fight against innovations or worship that is not strictly based on His Word.

2 Kings 18:1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that

Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

2 Kings 18:2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

2 Kings 18:3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

2 Kings 18:4 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

Hezekiah of Judah became king at age 25 and reigned for 29 years. “And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.” In other words, he was a *very good* king, as was David. To the contrary, his father Ahaz had been *very evil*, for he introduced idolatrous practices and had a heathen altar from Damascus copied for use in the Temple. Of course the kings of Israel were also evil, and an intermarriage relationship had much to do with the defilement of Judah. Hezekiah turned out remarkably well and was highly commended. He removed the high places, destroyed the images, and cut down the groves. Also, he smashed the brazen serpent, which Moses had made way back in the Wilderness of Sinai, because the people were burning incense to it.

Comment: Hezekiah's acts showed his real love for God. He could have rationalized that the serpent had been used of the Lord, but he destroyed it because of the association with idolatrous practices.

Reply: For at least eight centuries, the Israelites had revered the serpent as a talisman and burned incense to it. What was so obnoxious was that instead of burning incense to the Lord in the prescribed way through the priesthood, the people themselves burned incense to and worshipped this inanimate object. Since the people used the serpent idolatrously, we can see what would have happened if they had found Moses' body (Jude 9).

Hezekiah may have *personally* broken the brazen serpent into pieces. To do so would have been an example to the people that he meant business. He called it Nehushtan, that is, “a piece of brass,” in a derogatory sense (see the King James margin). In both the Old and New Testaments, God forbid His people to worship things made with man's hands—they were not to use them as objects of veneration—and the prohibition was done in a very sarcastic way in places. Hezekiah knew the Scriptures and had the spirit of the Lord.

Comment: It took a lot of courage on Hezekiah's part to institute all of these reforms.

Reply: Yes. For Gideon to cut down his father's grove, which pertained to a *local* deity, also took a lot of courage, but Hezekiah's deeds required even more courage because the evils had been a *national* practice and symbol *for centuries*.

2 Kings 18:5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

2 Kings 18:6 For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

2 Kings 18:7 And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth:

and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

Hezekiah trusted in God more than any kings before or after him. What a commendation! David and Josiah were excellent kings, but from an overall standpoint, Hezekiah exceeded them in morality and righteous acts. As time went on, David developed into a man after God's own heart, but there were low points in his reign and deeds (Acts 13:22). Compared to other kings, Hezekiah did the least objectionable deeds. God loved David—the inner man—but Hezekiah was commended because his deeds were so unusual. However, in the Lord's estimation, a person's deeds are not necessarily a true indicator of his sequential rank.

Q: Of course records were kept all along, but when would verse 5 have been added?

A: Ezra added this verse many years later. Following the Babylonian captivity, he returned to Israel and took some strong actions himself. For example, he made the Israelite men separate from their foreign wives.

God was with Hezekiah and prospered him because of his obedience to the commandments received through Moses and recorded in the Pentateuch. Hezekiah was courageous to rebel against and refuse to serve the king of Assyria, who had taken the ten tribes captive. Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Esar-haddan all afflicted Israel.

2 Kings 18:8 He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

Hezekiah meant business, for the Philistines had been a real thorn in the flesh of the nation of Israel—a constant irritant—for centuries, and he intended to set the house in order. By smiting “the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city,” Hezekiah again showed courage. The “tower of the watchmen” seems to have been a border city of Egypt with an Egyptian name of that significance. Thus Hezekiah smote the Philistines from the southern extremity to the northern extremity. Incidentally, this was the territory of Samson.

2 Kings 18:9 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

2 Kings 18:10 And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

2 Kings 18:11 And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:

2 Kings 18:12 Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.

King Shalmaneser of Assyria besieged Samaria for three years. At the end of that time, the ten tribes were taken captive because of disobedience. “They obeyed not the voice of the LORD ... but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses ... commanded.” Habor was where Jacob dwelled in the Mesopotamian region. Halah, or Chalah, was near the eastern extremity of Turkey. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria at this time.

2 Kings 18:13 Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria

come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

2 Kings 18:14 And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou putttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

2 Kings 18:15 And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house.

2 Kings 18:16 At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, the middle of his reign, King Sennacherib of Assyria captured "all the fenced cities of Judah," causing dire circumstances. Hezekiah sent a message to the king of Assyria, who was presently besieging Lachish, saying, "I have offended you by refusing to pay tribute. Name the tribute, and I will pay it." Lachish was south of and not far from Jerusalem. Not only had Sennacherib defeated the northern kingdom, but now he was achieving victory after victory with the cities of Judah. In capturing a city, he characteristically built a large mound, or pyramid, of skulls outside the city walls to terrorize the inhabitants. To the posterity, the skulls were a memorial of Sennacherib's destruction of that city.

Hezekiah's message to Sennacherib was more or less a delaying action. He paid a tremendous tribute of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold out of his own *personal* treasures and also gold cut from the Temple doors and pillars plus silver. Thus Hezekiah pacified the Assyrian king momentarily, but he knew the temperament of Sennacherib.

2 Kings 18:17 And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

2 Kings 18:18 And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

2 Kings 18:19 And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

Sennacherib sent Rab-shakeh and others and a great host to Jerusalem with a nasty and boastful message for King Hezekiah. As the spokesman, or representative, of the king of Assyria, Rab-shakeh told Hezekiah to submit peaceably but at a great cost, as will be seen. The message began, "What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?" In other words, Rab-shakeh, suspecting that Hezekiah was preparing to oppose Sennacherib, was trying to unnerve him by saying, "Where do you get your confidence?" Remember, Hezekiah had smitten the Philistines and cleared out their control in the Gaza Strip area, but Sennacherib had a great reputation for warfare.

The "conduit of the upper pool" was the supply of water from Solomon's pools near Hezekiah's tunnel. Thus Rab-shakeh spoke from an elevated position south of Jerusalem.

2 Kings 18:20 Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the

war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

2 Kings 18:21 Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.

2 Kings 18:22 But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

2 Kings 18:23 Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

Rab-shakeh gave an oration in which he mocked Hezekiah and put words in the king's mouth. These words were said in public, in front of an audience, with a number of people listening to the conversation. To a certain extent, Rab-shakeh was familiar with the religion of the Jews, but he gave a twisted application, misconstruing it the opposite way like a prejudiced worldly person who has only a smattering of truth and develops wrong conclusions. Rab-shakeh knew that Hezekiah was making hurried moves to gain strength but was not yet in a position to oppose the Assyrian army, which would soon besiege Jerusalem. In the meantime, a war of words was going on, for if Rab-shakeh could get Hezekiah to surrender without a battle, he would be favored even more by Sennacherib and perhaps be elevated to a higher post.

Rab-shakeh continued to speak to Hezekiah, completely misunderstanding the situation: "But if you say unto me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' did you not take away His high places and altars?" He thought Hezekiah would be defeated because he had removed altars to Jehovah on the hills. Hence Rab-shakeh was saying, "Even your God will not help you. Not only have you offended Him, but you do not have enough skilled riders to fight against me." Actually, the situation was the reverse—it was because Hezekiah had destroyed the *heathen* altars that God would give him the victory.

2 Kings 18:24 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

2 Kings 18:25 Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

2 Kings 18:26 Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

2 Kings 18:27 But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?

What strong, insulting words and braggadocio from Rab-shakeh! He had some understanding of the history of Judah but a wrong perspective. Speaking in the Semitic tongue to intimidate those who were listening, he was trying to incite an insurrection wherein the people would lose heart and pressure the king to submit peacefully. What audacity for him to say in effect, "I am not even a worshipper of your God, but He told me to go up against your country and destroy it." Rab-shakeh tried several different slants, one of which was to say that the Assyrian army was large and powerful, whereas Judah's forces were small.

Comment: The margins of some King James Bibles say that these verses are “a well-conceived piece of insidious propaganda.”

Reply: Yes, Rab-shakeh tried various insulting tactics. He said to the people who were listening, “My master did not send me to speak to your king. I came to save *you* if you are smart enough to listen to me.”

2 Kings 18:28 Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews’ language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria:

2 Kings 18:29 Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand:

2 Kings 18:30 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

2 Kings 18:31 Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern:

2 Kings 18:32 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us.

Rab-shakeh was still trying to undercut Hezekiah’s authority with his own people. Notice the language about everyone having his own vine and fig tree, which is a Kingdom promise (Micah 4:4). Rab-shakeh was trying to appeal to the people of Judah, who had come out of Egypt to a land of milk and honey. He was saying, “Assyria is a land of milk and honey. Why choose death? Come to my land and have life—with milk, honey, vines, and fig trees.”

Rab-shakeh also reasoned, “Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you.” Presumably Sennacherib had interrogated Israelite captives to get information about Hezekiah. Hence Rab-shakeh, having been in the presence of the Assyrian king, knew of Hezekiah’s accomplishments and that he trusted in God.

Rab-shakeh continued, “Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in Jehovah.” Hezekiah’s earlier actions in breaking the brazen serpent and cutting down the groves encouraged the righteously inclined in Judah to back him up with enthusiasm. Previously, under Ahaz, the people were very negligent, but now Hezekiah’s leadership was influential.

In addition, Rab-shakeh said, “Make an agreement with us, and submit peaceably. If you give us a present now as surety that you will submit and become captives, we will come back and give you safe conduct to Assyria. We will not kill you.” Of course if the people of Judah had agreed, the price of “presents” would have increased drastically.

2 Kings 18:33 Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

2 Kings 18:34 Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?

2 Kings 18:35 Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their

country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?

2 Kings 18:36 But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

2 Kings 18:37 Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

Rab-shakeh finished his speech, and as commanded by Hezekiah, the people listened in silence. Hezekiah had instructed them not to give a clue as to which way things were turning. Hence their silence left Rab-shakeh uncertain about whether his stratagems would succeed. He said no gods had been able to deliver their people from the Assyrians—and neither would Jehovah.

Comment: Various gods were named in 2 Kings 17:30,31. “And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.”

Reply: The previous king of Assyria had taken Israelites from the northern kingdom hostage. Then he placed peoples from different locales in Samaria. However, these peoples, known as Samaritans, had a problem, for it seemed that nature was opposing them. For example, lions came out of the forest along the Jordan and terrorized them. The Samaritans brought their own religion with them, but they also tried to pay respect to the God of the northern kingdom. In other words, they mixed their own religion of heathen and immoral practices with the worship of Jehovah. For example, Succoth-benoth means “daughters of the tabernacle,” which included prostitution to get money for temple coffers. Adrammelech and Anammelech pertained to Molech, the fire god, and Nergal was the sun god (*Ner* means “sun”; *gal* means “the whirling planets”). Thus we get some idea of the confusion in the Samaritan religion, while the people nominally recognized the God of Jacob and sacrificed a lamb once a year.

Now a new Assyrian king was on the throne, and when the Samaritans offered resistance, he besieged their cities and punished them. Rab-shakeh was saying to the people of Judah, “What about the gods of all those cities in Samaria? The Samaritans tried to go against King Sennacherib and were unsuccessful, so do you think you will fare any better if you listen to Hezekiah, who tells you to worship and fear Jehovah?” The reasoning was almost satanic.

Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, representatives of Hezekiah, properly rent their clothes before going back to the king. Because God had been sacrilegiously defied by Rab-shakeh, the three were in mourning for what they had heard, and they had been instructed not to reply. Not knowing what to do in this dilemma, they took their tale of woe to Hezekiah, who would react properly and handle the matter beautifully.

Q: Didn't the people of Judah realize what Jehovah had done for His people?

A: Not necessarily. And it is the same today. Does the average Jew know much about his own history? How many Jews *really* believe in the parting of the Red Sea? Most consider the account to be something like a fable that has a good moral lesson and gives encouraging words. Faith *truly* believes and acts accordingly.

As we will see, Hezekiah's reaction and manner of presentation were touching. He laid the matter in writing before the Lord God, saying in effect, “It is YOU they were insulting. What should we do?” Then he prayed.

2 Kings 19:1 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 19:2 And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

2 Kings 19:3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.

2 Kings 19:4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

2 Kings 19:5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

Previously Hezekiah had started a grand reform and been very zealous in removing the idols in high places and cleansing the land of idolatry. Then King Sennacherib of Assyria, who was engaged elsewhere in methodically besieging and capturing cities in Judah, sent Rab-shakeh, an emissary, to counsel the people of Jerusalem to surrender because warfare would be a hopeless task. Rab-shakeh used multiple verbal strategies.

Now Hezekiah sent Eliakim, Shebna, and others to Isaiah to see if the prophet would take their dire situation to the Lord in prayer. Hezekiah's message to Isaiah was, "It may be [that] the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh ... and will reprove [them] ... : wherefore lift up thy prayer for the *remnant* that are left." Since the ten tribes had already been taken into captivity, the "remnant" was the two tribes.

Notice the influence of Hezekiah. Not only did he rend his own clothes, cover himself with sackcloth, and go into the Temple to pray, but also he advised Eliakim and the other emissaries that in bringing the matter to Isaiah's attention, they should be appropriately garbed in sackcloth for the solemnity of the occasion, for a threat had been made against Judah and its God. At this time, Isaiah was the most prominent prophet, and his influence was quite well known. Hezekiah showed confidence in Isaiah by looking to him for advice and help.

The message from Hezekiah to Isaiah started as follows. "Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." In other words, those of Judah could not deliver themselves. The analogy was of a woman in travail who is *exhausted* from the pain. Her strength is drained, leaving her so weak that she cannot bring forth her child to the birth. When Hezekiah started his reign, he instituted successful reform through labor and much effort. Things progressed for a while, and the people were cooperating. Then Assyria, the enemy, came along with a tremendous force, threatening even Jerusalem. This foreign invasion threatened to overwhelm the city and was interfering so that there was not the strength to continue the reform and bring about the rebirth of the nation and the return of the people to God.

The pronoun choice is significant as the emissaries spoke to Isaiah on behalf of Hezekiah: "It may be the LORD *thy* God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD *thy* God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left." Twice they said to the prophet, "The LORD *thy* God," not "The LORD *our* God." Because of Isaiah's nearness to

and close rapport with the God of Israel as His noteworthy prophet, they were saying, “Will you bring the matter to *your* God.” The pronoun choice shows the respect they had for Isaiah.

2 Kings 19:6 And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

2 Kings 19:7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

Isaiah sent back a comforting message to Hezekiah: “Do not be afraid, for God is aware of Sennacherib’s blasphemy and boastfulness and will send a *blast* upon the king. Sennacherib shall hear a rumour [about the king of Ethiopia, a dangerous foe], and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.” In other words, a combination of things would happen. Sennacherib would hear a rumor, a false report, and assume it was true. The rumor was that the Ethiopians, who were strong black men, quite tall in stature, and marvelous warriors, were going to attack him when he was landlocked. Sennacherib had been unsuccessful in his fight against the city of Lachish, and with his forces now free, he was in a dilemma. With the king of Ethiopia to his south and Jerusalem to his north, Sennacherib was afraid of being boxed in by hostile forces, especially since Israel was noted for joining forces with Egypt on different occasions to fight a common enemy. Therefore, Sennacherib wanted to eliminate the danger from the north by frightening Hezekiah into submitting without warfare. Then he could concentrate on the danger from the south. Accordingly, Rab-shakeh spoke on Sennacherib’s behalf, bombastically telling what the god and king of Assyria could and would do to Judah. Thus one aspect of the “blast” was that Rab-shakeh’s wind in making such boastful claims would be deflated. Another aspect was that the “angel of the LORD” smote 185,000 Assyrians in one night (Isa. 37:36).

In summary, three things would happen to Sennacherib. God would send a blast upon him, a rumor would cause the king to return to his own land, and he would fall by the sword in Assyria.

2 Kings 19:8 So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

2 Kings 19:9 And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,

2 Kings 19:10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

2 Kings 19:11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?

2 Kings 19:12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar?

2 Kings 19:13 Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?

Once again Sennacherib tried to frighten the people of Judah into surrendering by sending messengers to repeat the threat to Hezekiah (compare 2 Kings 18:33,34). His message was,

“The kings [plural] of Assyria have destroyed many lands. Their gods did not deliver them, and your God will not deliver you.” In other words, “Not only have I been successful, but consider my predecessors [Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser]. As Assyrians, we have all captured nations, so who are you to oppose us?” He kept pressuring Hezekiah to surrender quickly.

Comment: In the previous chapter (2 Kings 18:19,33), the same argument was used but with “king” (singular). “Thus saith the great *king*, the *king* of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?... Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the *king* of Assyria?” Also, fewer places were mentioned.

Reply: Yes, Sennacherib enlarged the threat to say that from a historical standpoint, Judah was no match for Assyria. His attitude was, “If you try to engage in hostilities, we will utterly destroy you.” He used fear and past successes as weapons in trying to get Hezekiah to submit.

These cities that are listed were more or less city states as in the feudal days and Middle Ages of Europe. However, quite a lot of land surrounded each one, so the well-fortified cities were like little nations with capable forces.

2 Kings 19:14 And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

2 Kings 19:15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

2 Kings 19:16 LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

2 Kings 19:17 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

2 Kings 19:18 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

2 Kings 19:19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

Hezekiah uttered a beautiful and intelligent prayer. He beseeched, “Now, Lord, the battle is in your hands, for it is your name that has been insulted. We are helpless, but we know your power. You are the true God—the God of not only Israel but also all the kingdoms of the world.” Notice how he gave the prayer. He entered the Temple, “the house of the LORD,” and spread out before Him the document from the king of Assyria. Of course Hezekiah did not go into the Holy or the Most Holy but was outside in the court, between the Laver and the door to the Holy. He then implored God to look at the letter with His eyes and to bow down His ear to hear; that is, “See and hear the blasphemy.” Sometimes such gesticulation with the use of hands and body is effective. Similarly, beating the chest in sorrow is a fitting outward expression of agonizing in prayer, for it demonstrates the earnestness of the petitioner.

Comment: Hezekiah prayed, “O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest *between* the cherubims.” “Between” is a supplied word and should be “above,” which is a more reverent thought.

Reply: Yes. Psalm 80:1, which reads, “O Shepherd of Israel, ... thou that dwellest between the cherubims,” has the thought “O thou that sittest enthroned *above* the cherubim.” The cherubim

were beneath the throne seat, or platform, on which God was seated. His throne was His chariot.

Of course Hezekiah could not see the Ark of the Covenant, which was in the Most Holy, but being out in the court before the Temple on the east side, he was facing the Holy and the Most Holy. In a loud voice, he talked through the Veil as though he was speaking to God, pleading with Him to read the document. Hezekiah's beautiful and inspirational prayer was very appropriate. He admitted that the contents of the letter were true—that Sennacherib and his forebears were successful—but the gods of the other cities were of wood and stone, whereas Jehovah was the *true* God.

2 Kings 19:20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

2 Kings 19:21 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

2 Kings 19:22 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

Notice how the answer to Hezekiah's prayer was given. He was in the court speaking to the Lord in the Most Holy, but the answer was given to Isaiah, who was not at the Temple. Isaiah sent the message to Hezekiah that God had heard him. Thus we see how the true designated prophets of Israel were mouthpieces for conveying instructions to the kings. At times, the high priests were also mouthpieces, but since the priesthood became polluted in different generations, the prophets were usually the mouthpieces.

We are inclined to think that verse 21 should be stated in present tense. God's message for the king of Assyria was, "The virgin the daughter of Zion *despises* thee, and *laughs* thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem *shakes* her head at thee." While Israel was pictured as a woman laughing with scorn at the king of Assyria, attention was quickly drawn to the *God* of this virgin daughter. Verse 22 reads, "Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel." In other words, the message to Sennacherib was, "You are reproaching not the helpless daughter of Zion but the *High and Holy One of Israel*, her *God*." Suitable punishment would be forthcoming. As recorded in the previous chapter, Rab-shakeh must have been very dramatic in his presentation before the people of Judah, who were sitting on the wall. Wanting them to hear the threats distinctly, he would have powerfully expressed and dramatized his words by lifting up his eyes and cursing and strongly insulting Israel's God. By implication, his words were accompanied by appropriate emphasis through body language. As he scorned the God of Israel, so the reply boldly indicated that Judah would not submit to his demands.

2 Kings 19:23 By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.

2 Kings 19:24 I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.

God revealed the boastful thoughts of Sennacherib and his merciless besieging and destruction

of cities. Assyria had come with a multitude of chariots, horses, and men to invade the domain of Israel (called here “the forest of his Carmel”). In his heart, the king of Assyria had “dugged and drunk strange waters,” and with the sole of his feet, he had “dried up all the rivers of besieged places.” By these past successes, Sennacherib was emboldened to capture Judah.

2 Kings 19:25 Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.

Sennacherib was boastful, but the reason he had succeeded in warfare was that *God* had given him that success. However, Sennacherib felt the successes were of his *own* doing. In other words, he had been raised up much as Cyrus the Persian was raised up later with regard to Babylon and the release of Israelite captives at the end of the 70 years.

2 Kings 19:26 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.

In the Middle East, there is much verdure for a short time—the lands are beautifully green—but the summer heat and the east wind quickly dry up the growth.

2 Kings 19:27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

God knew about Sennacherib’s and Assyria’s rage against Him.

2 Kings 19:28 Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

Verse 28 illustrates what putting a hook in the nose means, namely, to turn one back by the way which he came. A similar term is used in Ezekiel 38:4 with regard to Gog and Magog and the last days: “And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.” Gog will invade Europe to the west, but after these forces from Russia do a certain amount of damage, they will be turned around to go down to Israel. The point is that *God* will put the hook in the nose.

Moreover, God would put His “bridle” in Sennacherib’s lips to turn him back by the way which he came. A bridle, which has a steel bar with a protruding knob on each end, is put in a horse’s mouth. Since the mouth is sensitive, reins attached to that bar are used to control, turn, or halt the horse. Similarly, a ring is put in the tender nose of a bull. By means of that ring, a man can easily make an enormous and powerful bull obey and follow him.

The bridle would halt and turn the Assyrians around, and the hook would pull them back to their homeland. God would thwart Sennacherib’s purpose and bring him back to Assyria.

2 Kings 19:29 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

In verses 29-34, God addressed Israel through the Prophet Isaiah. Hezekiah was being informed as to what he should do. He was to stand up against Assyria and not be meek and

submissive to Sennacherib and his bold threats—even though Israel was like a virgin without power in comparison to the Assyrian bull that had come with chariots, horses, and armor.

Assyria had been besieging Judah for some time. As a result, the people were so fearful of the Assyrian army that they ceased their normal activities when they saw the enemy host coming and fled to Jerusalem, a walled city, for protection. They forsook houses and crops, stopping their usual agricultural pursuits. Now God gave Judah a *sign*. Not only would He dispose of the enemy, but He would provide sufficient food by means of a *miracle*. In a sabbath year when the Israelites were not to sow or reap until the third year, God provided a double abundance of crops to tide them over. Although the case at hand was not necessarily a sabbath year, the people could not pursue their normal sowing procedure. Therefore, for two years, they would be able to eat what grew of itself because of God's miraculous help. In the third year, they would again sow seed. The unsown land would be as though it was miraculously sown. What, then, constituted the "sign," the miracle, that God was favoring Judah? The stray seed would be so multitudinous that it would support the people for two years.

Comment: Being freed from agricultural pursuits for that length of time would give the people time to rebuild the cities that had been destroyed by Sennacherib.

2 Kings 19:30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

2 Kings 19:31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

Verses 30 and 31 are an end-of-age prophecy that is mysteriously inserted in a historical context. The roots of the "remnant" will go down deep so that they will no more be plucked up, and Judah will bear an abundance of fruit aboveground. The Holy Remnant will be contrite and converted.

The ten-tribe kingdom had already been taken into captivity by the king of Assyria. Now the two-tribe kingdom was being threatened. Those of Judah in Isaiah's day understood verses 30 and 31 to pertain to their own miraculous deliverance—that the two-tribe "remnant" would be spared, or saved. But actually, as worded here and elsewhere, this prophecy pertains to the very end of the Gospel Age, when only the godly Jew will be saved out of Jacob's Trouble. Those comprising the Holy Remnant will be handpicked (Isa. 4:2-4).

Comment: The original prophecy is in Isaiah 37:31,32. He was the prophet at that time.

Reply: In the Old Testament, perhaps 50 prophecies of the future are inserted in a context that is foreign to the prophecy. In fact, their placement makes the prophecies stand out as if they were in italics. If we are familiar with what is happening in the natural picture, then a verse that is not in complete harmony with the context attracts our attention—as if the Holy Spirit is saying, "This verse is spiritual." For example, in chapters 50 and 51 of Jeremiah, most of the verses are *natural*, pertaining to the literal destruction of literal Babylon back in the prophet's day, but other verses stand out because they have not yet been fulfilled. The fact that they do not completely fit in with the context indicates they apply to mystic (or spiritual) Babylon. And some of those verses are quoted word for word in the Book of Revelation.

2 Kings 19:32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

2 Kings 19:33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

2 Kings 19:34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

With all of Sennacherib's boasting, he would not be permitted to enter Jerusalem or attack it. He could not "shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it." Verse 33 refers to the bridle in the lip and the hook in the nose (see verse 28). "By the way that he came, by the same shall he return," for *God* would defend Jerusalem and protect the Temple for His own sake and for his servant David's sake. The reference to David reminds us of the expression "the sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:3).

2 Kings 19:35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

2 Kings 19:36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

2 Kings 19:37 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

Sennacherib was assassinated by his two sons Adrammelech and Sharezer, who escaped to Armenia (Ararat—see KJV margin). The "blast" of verse 7 is the destruction of verse 35. A silent disease germ killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. The angel who smote them was no doubt the Logos. This incident reminds us of the destroying angel at the time of the first Passover. In the antitype, the destroying angel is Satan, the means by which the death of the firstborn is accomplished.

Q: What was the nature of the plague?

A: The Scriptures do not say, but cholera or typhoid is a possibility. For instance, in India in the past, it was not unusual for a traveler walking along the streets to see a person in front of him fall over dead.

Comment: When David sinned in numbering the people, God told him to choose one of three punishments: (1) three years' famine, (2) three months of being destroyed before his foes, or (3) three days of pestilence in the land, with "the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel" (1 Chron. 21:9-14). David replied, "I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man." Hence God sent a pestilence in which 70,000 men of Israel died. And 2 Samuel 24:15,16 reads, "So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite."

Reply: That threshing floor is where the Temple was built.

Comment: The account in 2 Chronicles 30 provides additional details. *Before* this problem with Sennacherib, Hezekiah had ordained a solemn passover, which the people *faithfully* kept. With

the people having already demonstrated their desire to serve God, the scene was set for the subsequent miraculous deliverance from the king of Assyria.

Reply: Yes, the people of Judah had a good start, and then came this alien intrusion by a seemingly innumerable host. Sennacherib was purposely spared by the destroying angel so that he could go back to his homeland in fulfillment of the earlier prophecy.

Comment: 2 Chronicles 32:22,23 adds a touching detail. “Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side. [As a result, *many* of the people] ... brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.”

Q: Why did two of Sennacherib’s sons kill him?

A: They wanted to succeed to the throne, but when their deed was known, they fled to the Mount Ararat region, fearing for their lives. After Sennacherib was assassinated, Esar-haddon, another son, reigned in his stead.

Incidentally, the Pastor mentioned that secular history is reliable from 536 BC, the time of Cyrus. But now we are discussing Assyrian kings, and some brethren are having new ideas along the lines of chronology. However, in trying to go back and correlate these events, one not only has to be a scholar but almost has to be divinely guided because of the nature of the “evidence,” which has been recorded by various individuals and is not necessarily accurate. For example, some of the tables have been fudged by the finders.

2 Kings 20:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

Hezekiah was sick unto death, and the Prophet Isaiah confirmed that the illness was fatal. Thus it appeared that his doom was sealed.

2 Kings 20:2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

2 Kings 20:3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

Hezekiah’s reaction is touching—he turned his face to the wall, prayed, and “wept sore.” Hezekiah beseeched, “Lord, remember how I have walked in truth with a perfect heart and done what was good in your sight.” This *secret* prayer is *publicly* known through Scripture. Weeping usually opens up the wires of reception to prayer. We recall the publican who stood afar off, beat his chest, was ashamed to lift his eyes toward heaven, and said, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

Comment: The account does not tell what was behind Hezekiah’s prayer, but having instituted so many reforms, he probably wanted to do a lot more for the Lord. If his life was prolonged, he would continue to cleanse the land for the Lord’s sake.

Reply: Yes, it is likely that the motive for requesting an extension of his life was not selfish. He wanted to further and complete the reforms he had started.

2 Kings 20:4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

2 Kings 20:5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 20:6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

2 Kings 20:7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

Through Isaiah, Hezekiah was told that he would be healed and would live for 15 additional years. But first, he had to make a poultice of figs and lay it on his boil, the diseased part. God also promised that the king of Assyria would no longer trouble Judah.

Comment: A marginal reference states that the “boil” was “a bubo, a swelling of the groin and a manifestation of the plague.”

Reply: This swelling of the groin was not a boil in the normal sense. The word “bubo” refers to the bubonic plague, from which individuals keeled over and died suddenly in one day. Under such conditions, the people just stepped over the corpses and left them unburied because they had become inured to death. Emotionally drained, they could no longer respond with sorrow. It is likely that the 185,000 Assyrians who died in one night were victims of the bubonic plague.

Comment: Isaiah 38:9-22 gives Hezekiah's prayer of thanksgiving for his recovery.

“The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:

“I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years.

“I said, I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

“Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

“I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

“Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.

“What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

“O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

“Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the

pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

“For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

“The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

“The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD. [Here Hezekiah’s prayer ended.]

“For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover.

“Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?”

In his song of thanksgiving for having been miraculously healed, Hezekiah recalled some of the things he had said in his earlier prayer. Right after Hezekiah expressed his thankfulness, God consoled him by saying that the king of Assyria would not trouble him further. In his sickness, Hezekiah had mourned like a dove, and his teeth had chattered. With tears, he thought he would die that very night. Referring to the evil reputation of his father, Hezekiah thanked God for having been kept from the “pit of corruption.” He praised the Lord for being able to escape that parental influence.

2 Kings 20:8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

2 Kings 20:9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

2 Kings 20:10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

2 Kings 20:11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

When Hezekiah asked for a sign that God would heal him so that he could go to the Temple on the third day, Isaiah gave him a choice; namely, did he want “the shadow [to] go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees”? Hezekiah asked for the more difficult sign: “Let the shadow return backward ten degrees.” Accordingly, Isaiah cried unto Jehovah, and the shadow was brought ten degrees backward on the “[sun]dial of Ahaz.”

A sundial is usually an upright triangle set on a brass plate. If the triangle is properly oriented to the points of the compass, the sun shines on the dial, creating a shadow, and the time of day can be told by the shadow. As the sun transits over the dial during the day, the shadow moves to the other side of the dial. Therefore, it would be a miracle if, toward the close of the day, the shadow was cast contrary to its normal position. From a practical standpoint, the change would have to be ten degrees to be appreciably noted as a distinct difference from the norm.

Q: How would this “sign” have been accomplished? Would a bright shining have made the shadow go backward?

A: That is possible, or a cloud could have created the shadow. If a cloud obscures the sun, a

backward shadow can be created, but either way the *timing* was miraculous, for it coincided with Hezekiah's request.

Bro. Russell suggested two possibilities with regard to Joshua's long day. One possibility is that as the sun set on the horizon and went down in the normal fashion, a cloud formation acted like a mirror, reflecting daylight into the night (Josh. 10:12-14). The moon took over later so that there was one *long* day of light. In other words, the sun shone inordinately long until the moon got sufficiently bright to illuminate the night. Hence there was light for the 12 hours of night. On certain unusual occasions, the moon is so bright that a person can read a newspaper.

Contrition and tears can move the Lord, and here Hezekiah's life was prolonged for 15 years. Even Ahab's repentance delayed judgment until a subsequent generation. Thus we see what repentance can do—it may not remove the curse, but some compassion can be exercised if the repentance is preceded by *genuine* remorse.

Q: In verse 9, the Revised Standard has “ten steps” instead of “ten degrees.” Is the thought the same?

A: The words are synonymous in the Hebrew depending on where they are used. For instance, the singers in the Temple stood on different steps, or they sang one verse and went up a step, sang another verse and went up another step, etc., until all the singers were in the bowl. That was a mechanical demonstration of the significance of the “Song of degrees” in Psalms 120–134, which were based on the fact that Jerusalem was elevated. In addition, when individuals and families went to Jerusalem to keep the feasts, they sang hymns as they ascended; that is, each time they approached an elevation, they sang another hymn. Hence the “Songs of degrees” were based on how far the people had gone up the ascent to Jerusalem. In the Third Temple will be two little singing bowls, which will amplify the sound and purportedly direct it to the Lord. Each bowl will be at a 45-degree angle, and they will meet in a point that is toward the Most Holy. Thus the songs of praise are not basically for man but are hymns of praise to God.

2 Kings 20:12 At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

2 Kings 20:13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.

Verses 12 and 13 reveal that Hezekiah was of an emotional disposition. Berodach-baladan, the son of the king of Babylon, sent letters and a present because he had heard that Hezekiah was sick. Being emotionally moved, Hezekiah unwisely responded by showing him *all* the treasures and *all* the precious things of his house and dominion. “There was *nothing* in his house, nor in *all* his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.” Jesus gave the lesson in Matthew 7:6, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” This caution applies in regard to spiritual things where an unregenerate heart and a swinish disposition are present.

Comment: The same principle is stated in Proverbs 29:11, “A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.” And Exodus 23:8 reads, “Thou shalt take no gift [specifically, a bribe]: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous [in judgment].”

2 Kings 20:14 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What

said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

2 Kings 20:15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them.

2 Kings 20:16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.

2 Kings 20:17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

Isaiah reprimanded Hezekiah for his boastfulness and lack of wisdom in showing all his treasures to the heathen visitors from Babylon. As punishment, all of the treasures would someday be carried off to Babylon.

Comment: It almost seems that Hezekiah was naive in his emotionalism, for he confessed *unashamedly* to the prophet what he had done.

Comment: Perhaps pride was a factor in his wanting to show all his precious things.

Reply: Hezekiah could have been naive in the sense that he did not realize either the penalty for disobedience or the strictness required for obedience. But certainly some pride was manifested because *his* house, *his* armor, etc., were displayed. In other words, there was a mixture of pride and naiveness.

Comment: The lesson for us is not to boast lest an object of pride be taken away.

Previously the Assyrian power was a threat. Now the king of Babylon was showing some interest in Hezekiah and his kingdom. Thus two different powers were involved. In time, the Assyrian power was overtaken by the Babylonian power, which started history from the standpoint of the image of five universal empires in the second chapter of Daniel. To King Nebuchadnezzar, it was said, "Thou art this head of gold" (Dan. 2:38).

2 Kings 20:18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

2 Kings 20:19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?

Hezekiah was told that as punishment, his sons would be made eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Not only would his treasures be taken to Babylon, but the fruit of his loins would suffer the fate of castration. Hezekiah's reaction, "Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken," reminds us of the words of Eli, the high priest who was remiss in not removing his wicked sons from service in the Tabernacle. When told of the coming judgment, he said, "It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good" (1 Sam. 3:18). Of course Eli's transgression was more serious than that of Hezekiah. Thus there are *degrees* of transgression.

Q: For verse 19, the RSV has, "Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, 'The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good.' For he thought, 'Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?'" Was Hezekiah not that concerned about the fate of his sons as long as he himself had peace and security?

A: That may have been true, but it is more likely Hezekiah felt that the interest of the nation superseded the interest of his own personal family.

Comment: 2 Chronicles 32:25,26 indicates that Hezekiah humbled himself. “His heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.”

Reply: The overall assessment of his reign was very favorable (2 Kings 18:5).

2 Kings 20:20 And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 20:21 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

Hezekiah built a conduit, a tunnel, to bring water from the Virgins Pool farther up on Mount Zion to the Pool of Siloam down below. The tunnel was dug through solid rock so that water from outside the city would come into the city. This clever method provided a continuous water supply for the inhabitants of Jerusalem in a way that a besieging enemy could not block. Hezekiah concentrated “all his might” to accomplish this feat of making a hidden aqueduct.

When King Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 21:1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Hephzibah.

Manasseh was only 12 years old when he began to reign in Judah, and he had a long reign of 55 years. His mother, Hephzibah, was the wife of good King Hezekiah.

2 Kings 21:2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

Manasseh did that which was evil, for he practiced the abominations of the “heathen,” the Canaanites, who inhabited the land when the Israelites entered. The term “Canaanites” can be used in a broad sense to include other heathen peoples (the Perizzites, the Jebusites, etc.), or it can refer to a specific people.

It is interesting that Hezekiah, who was a *good* king for most of his reign, had an *evil* father. Now Manasseh, who had a *good* father, was an *evil* king. Thus the cycle was evil (Ahaz), good (Hezekiah), and evil (Manasseh). Hezekiah had a strong character and determination to be able to resist the evil influence.

2 Kings 21:3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

2 Kings 21:4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.

2 Kings 21:5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of

the LORD.

Manasseh negated the good deeds of Hezekiah, his father. He rebuilt the high places and the Baal altars and worshipped “all the host of heaven.” He even had the audacity to build altars to false gods right in the inner and outer courts of Solomon’s Temple. Since Jerusalem was supposed to be the capital of *God’s* kingdom, His name was to be preeminent and solely considered as the Deity in that city. Instead Manasseh instituted all kinds of heathen worship and altars both in Jerusalem and in the hills and prominent places surrounding the city.

2 Kings 21:6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

2 Kings 21:7 And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

Manasseh’s deeds and practices were abominable. It was one thing to make icons and altars that were dedicated to alien gods, but he even sacrificed his own son—and other children—to the fire god Molech (2 Chron. 33:6). In addition, he “observed times” (practiced astrology) and “used enchantments” (burned incense and cast spells to create an atmosphere where one could supposedly think more clearly). The use of enchantments was the “drug syndrome,” which, to a certain extent, puts the mind in a realm of fantasy. However, “expanding” the mind with a heightened sense of a feeling of superiority is an illusion, for such drugs actually destroy the mind. Manasseh also “dealt with familiar spirits,” whereby fallen angels tried to impersonate the dead either by using a vision that resembled the person or by perfectly imitating the voice of the deceased. The word “familiar” means the evil spirits manifest themselves in a manner that resembles a friend, relative, etc.—someone close to the individual making the inquiry. The spirits are “familiar” in that they imitate or personify the dead person known by the inquirer.

Many years ago a sister who came into present truth and was very zealous had a hard time believing in the existence of fallen angels. We tried to warn her of the dangers, and so did her husband, who, prior to consecration, had had dealings with Houdini and other world-famous magicians. One day a woman from a past association surprised him with a visit. While all three were in the parlor having a discussion, a voice was heard in the corner of the room on the level of the floor. The voice reprimanded the sister for not believing in fallen spirits. Of course she was terrified, but she and her husband ignored the voice and pretended that everything was normal. When the woman left, the husband said to his wife, “Did you hear that voice?” She replied, “Yes,” and from then on, she believed in the existence of fallen angels.

Isaiah 29:4 verifies the source of such voices as being from the fallen angels, for it tells that the voice comes “out of the ground”—it is as if the voice is coming off the floor. “And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.”

Manasseh “wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.” He set a graven image in a grove in the court of Solomon’s Temple. Some Bible commentators have difficulty thinking of a grove in the house of God, but even today, trees are growing in the court on the Temple Mount. Moreover, shrubbery and trees were in the court of Solomon’s Temple to provide beauty and shade. Thus the verdure had a purpose and was proper in the court—but not when planted in connection with a heathen idol. Manasseh’s graven image was probably a large wooden statue of Ashtoreth, the queen of heaven. Other names for this

goddess were Astarte and the Roman Venus. A counterpart in the antitype would be Catholic statues of the Virgin Mary, which are an adaptation of heathen practices that are claimed to be sanctified and holy. Of course the Holy Scriptures do not countenance this type of worship.

Comment: Kings Ahab and Ahaz committed these same abominations. Over and over again, the same sins entangle the human race.

Reply: Yes. The sins of humanity are not as new as some people think. The lust of the flesh is the history of the human race (Sodom and Gomorrah, for example). In a society like ours with a great development in knowledge, we would expect such sins to be uncommon, but history is repeating itself as conditions are rapidly growing worse and worse. As a result, an imminent and necessary judgment is coming.

Comment: 1 Corinthians 5:7 reads, “Purge out therefore the *old leaven*,” showing that the same old sin keeps cropping up.

Comment: Deuteronomy 16:21,22 states, “Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God.... Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God hateth.”

Reply: Trees were not to be planted *near the altar* because in the antitype, they would detract from Christ and his sacrifice. However, it was permissible for trees and bushes to be in the court of Solomon’s Temple—away from the altar—as ornamentation. There will be trees and shrubs in the future Ezekiel’s Temple. But with the altar being the focus of concentration, anything that negated or detracted from the lesson of Jesus’ sacrifice on Calvary was strictly forbidden, for it broke the thought of reverence. The Deuteronomy text does not contradict what we have been saying.

2 Kings 21:8 Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.

In Leviticus and Deuteronomy, Moses warned that certain heathen practices would follow. If the Israelites obeyed the Lord, they would be greatly blessed. However, Moses prophesied that the nation would disobey and not remain steadfast. God said, “Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers.” Then He added a modifying clause: “*only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.*”

2 Kings 21:9 But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

Not only did the Israelites not listen, but they did even *more evil* under Manasseh’s leadership than the heathen. What is the thought here?

Comment: Israel was more responsible than the heathen. The sins may have been the same, but the responsibility was greater because Israel had the Law and the prophets.

Reply: Yes, the Israelites had *more responsibility* because they had *more knowledge* of what not to do. They *deliberately* disobeyed.

Comment: The heathen served false gods, but the Israelites did these things in *God’s* name.

Reply: Yes, the Israelites wove heathen practices into their worship of Jehovah. The result was “Babylon”—a mixture, *confusion*. The Creator of the universe favored Israel in a special sense, but they “hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them.”

2 Kings 21:10 And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

2 Kings 21:11 Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols:

Manasseh did wickedly “*above* all that the Amorites did.” Israel was promised the land of Canaan in the beginning, but that promise could not be fulfilled until the iniquity of the Amorites had come to the full (Gen. 15:16). At that time, the Amorites would be cast out, and the Israelites could rightly enter the land.

2 Kings 21:12 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.

God would bring such a judgment on Judah that the people’s ears would tingle. Severe emotions can cause various reactions. For example, extreme fright causes hair to stand on end and a tingling. Some people get a pain in the stomach from certain emotions. An emotional disorder can be brought on by a sudden tragedy. Verse 12 is saying that the news the people would hear about what was happening—and by implication what would soon happen to them—would interfere with the circulation of the head and brain, causing a literal tingling in the ears. An emotional trauma would occur.

2 Kings 21:13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.

Comment: The ten tribes had already been taken into captivity, so God was saying that the two tribes would experience the same judgments.

Reply: Yes. The “line,” used for measuring, was a measurement of *judgment* in this case. The “plummet” was a heavy, pointed lead weight. A string, or line, was tied to the center of the top of the plummet so that the point would give an accurate vertical measure. This true vertical line represented uprightness, righteousness. Judah’s being out of alignment because of its evil kings would bring judgment. Theoretically, this line of judgment with its plummet, like the sword of Damocles suspended by a thread, was hanging over Judah. God, the righteous Judge, knew all that was happening, so it was just a matter of time until judgment would be inflicted on the two tribes, similar to what had happened to Samaria and the house of Ahab. The sins of Ahab, including his marriage to Jezebel, brought the northern kingdom to ruin.

Wiping Jerusalem like a dish and turning it upside down meant that the city would be wiped clean and that society would be turned upside down. In other words, God would *empty* the land of its inhabitants. Just as the northern kingdom was carried into captivity, so this would happen to the southern kingdom too.

2 Kings 21:14 And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;

2 Kings 21:15 Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.

God would forsake the “remnant” of His inheritance, that is, Judah and Benjamin. Judah would become a “prey” (the recipient of the enemy’s anger and attack) and a “spoil” (taken by the enemy as slaves).

Along another line, when Jesus breaks down Satan’s house, he will take the human race as a spoil. Those who have been under captivity to Satan will become captive to Christ. A spoil is that which the enemy considers a benefit. With God and Jesus, those of the human race who convert to righteousness will be a benefit. As prophesied in Isaiah 53:12, Jesus will divide the spoil with the mighty (the 144,000). “Therefore will I [God] divide him [Jesus] a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong [the Church in glory]; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” The Little Flock will share with Jesus in the blessings of the Kingdom reign.

2 Kings 21:16 Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

Manasseh shed “very much” innocent blood until “he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.” Nero, too, was a bloody individual. Becoming insane as time went on, he was extremely suspicious and put people to death for the least little rumor. He burned many Christians alive on stakes before his palace.

Besides the intellectual corruption of religion, Manasseh committed flagrant unjust acts and sadistic deeds in which innocent people lost their lives. Moreover, judgment in the courts was perverted to favor the wicked, and proper morals and conduct were turned upside down during his reign. The mention of Jerusalem suggests that Manasseh was *personally* responsible.

Comment: Manasseh could have been responsible for Isaiah’s death.

Reply: Yes, that could be. Since Isaiah prophesied during the reign of Hezekiah, a good king, it is likely that Manasseh, his son, an *evil* king, sawed the prophet asunder to silence the thunderings against his own wickedness (Heb. 11:37).

Comment: Despite the 55 years of evil, it is interesting that 2 Chronicles 33:11-17 tells of a little period of repentance, which the Lord hearkened to. The account reads as follows:

“Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

“And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,

“And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.

“Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.

“And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city.

“And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

“Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only.”

Reply: Yes, that account is important. Manasseh was brought into captivity in chains by the king of Assyria. We are not told how long the captivity lasted, but the fact that Manasseh reigned for 55 years shows, to our judgment, that he was only in captivity for a few months, not years, before his release. Because he repented and reasoned that he was being punished for his evil deeds and abominations in direct opposition to God, he was somehow miraculously delivered. (The implication is that he prayed, and God answered the prayer.) Manasseh returned to Jerusalem and tried to make reparation, but that did not exonerate him from his deeds because his reign as a whole is a blot on human history. He had corrupted the nation so badly that when he tried to undo the evil, he was not successful. The people went right on worshipping in the high places.

Manasseh’s repentance brings up an interesting study. Ahab was also given a respite in his evil reign when he repented, put on sackcloth and ashes, and humbled himself before God in front of the nation, yet his guilt remained and will have to be expiated in the Kingdom. Nevertheless, *sincere* repentance with tears does merit some softening of judgment—not exoneration but a softening—at least in the present life.

2 Kings 21:17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles are primarily about Judah’s kings; i.e., they are written from the standpoint of a faithful historian in Judah. Conversely, 1 and 2 Kings are generally about Israel’s kings; they present Israel’s standpoint. Of course a good historian would record both sides. What happened in the northern kingdom affected the southern kingdom, and vice versa.

2 Kings 21:18 And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 21:19 Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

2 Kings 21:20 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did.

2 Kings 21:21 And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them:

2 Kings 21:22 And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.

Amon, Manasseh’s son, reigned for only two years and did that which was evil. Several times an evil king who followed an evil king’s long reign had a very short reign himself. In a sense, the short reign was a judgment. Manasseh started a reform work but did not complete it, and Amon continued the evil.

2 Kings 21:23 And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house.

2 Kings 21:24 And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

2 Kings 21:25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 21:26 And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

Manasseh had a private cemetery on his own property called the “garden of Uzza” (verse 18). Both he and Amon were buried there, rather than in the Tomb of the Kings. Evidently, Uzza(h) had had a complex there years earlier.

When Amon’s servants assassinated him, the people of the land selected Josiah, a son of Amon, as the next king. Josiah was a good king. He was probably not the firstborn because Manasseh “made his son [and other children] pass through the fire” (2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chron. 33:6).

Heredity and environment are both factors in character development. For a person who has an evil father to develop a good character, he might have to fight against genetic traits, and he should get in a better environment as soon as possible. The Christian is developed by both environment and knowledge, and he can overcome certain weaknesses by placing himself in a good environment where righteousness becomes pleasurable. In an unrighteous atmosphere, sin is pleasurable, but when proper steps are taken in a righteous environment, bad habits and desires are greatly modified after a while. Thus habit of thought, fellowship, study, etc., have a bearing on a person’s taking and retaining a righteous stand in the present life.

In future studies, we will come to a prophetic aspect, for in many respects, the life of Josiah has an important relationship both in regard to prophecy and in tying together the activities of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

2 Kings 22:1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.

2 Kings 22:2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

Comment: Amon was 22 when he began to reign, and he reigned for two years—to age 24. When he died, Josiah, “his son,” reigned in his stead. Since verse 1 states that Josiah was eight years old when he started to reign, Amon must have been only 16 when Josiah was born. Not only does 2 Chronicles 34:1 verify Josiah’s age, but Matthew 1:10 verifies the lineage by saying that Josiah was a son of Amon. “And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias.”

Reply: It is unusual but theoretically possible for a young man of 16 to father a son. Also, Amon was evil, walking in all the ways of his father Manasseh (2 Kings 21:20,21). Manasseh did repent near the end of his life, but only when he was taken into captivity and put in an iron or brass “oven” with holes, as described in Jewish tradition or their Targum, a history written by rabbis. Fires were built around the oven, and in his torment, Manasseh prayed for forgiveness. Because of the prayers, God had mercy, but nevertheless, he will receive judgments in the future. When Manasseh started some reforms, trying to undo the damage he had caused, the people were not in sympathy because they were so steeped in evil. When his son Amon

succeeded him, he reigned for only two years because his servants conspired to kill him. The people were not in sympathy with his assassination, so they killed the servants.

Josiah appeared on the scene at age eight and reigned for 31 years. A *very good king* (of an *evil father*), he “turned not aside to the right hand or to the left”; that is, in the Lord’s sight, he was faithful throughout his reign. Of course he was not perfect, but he had favor overall. Some Bible commentators think Josiah was next to David in being the most desirable of the kings of Israel. As we will see, he instituted thorough reforms.

Q: The Scriptures contain exalted thoughts about Hezekiah, implying he had no equal. “He [Hezekiah] trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him” (2 Kings 18:5). Both Josiah and Hezekiah were highly commended, but there is a difference in the terminology that is used. Would each have excelled in a different way?

A: Hezekiah had an overall approval rating, but Josiah’s level of approval was even higher. Chapters 29–32, 34, and 35 of 2 Chronicles provide additional information on these two kings.

2 Kings 22:3 And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

2 Kings 22:4 Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people:

2 Kings 22:5 And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house,

2 Kings 22:6 Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

Ten years later, when Josiah was 18, he sent Shaphan, the scribe, to Hilkiyah, the high priest, to count the silver in the Temple treasury to make repairs. Of course Josiah would have been active in the meantime. 2 Chronicles 34:3-7 tells that he started reforms and cleansing the land in the eighth year of his reign.

“For in the eighth year of his reign [at age 16?], while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

“And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

“And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

“And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.

“And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.”

Thus we can see that Josiah was active earlier than is mentioned in 2 Kings. Evil kings had added statues and altars to the Temple, and idolatrous practices had been instituted that had to be removed. In addition, Josiah saw that repairs were needed.

By the permission of evil, God tests the human race, especially the rulers, for He can see who is loyal to Him and who is not. Both good and bad deeds are recorded as historical facts, and the summing up occurs when the Lord makes judgments. In retrospect, the people will see God's wisdom in temporarily allowing the evil, for it will sort out and manifest those who, under conditions of duress and temptation, desire to please Him.

2 Kings 22:7 Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

2 Kings 22:8 And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

Comment: What a nice commendation to be recorded for posterity! Those who counted the silver in the Temple treasury were so honest that no accounting was made.

Reply: Yes, their loyalty could be seen.

Hilkiyah told Shaphan he had found the "book of the law" in the Temple and then gave it to the scribe. Shaphan read the book.

2 Kings 22:9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 22:10 And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

2 Kings 22:11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

Having given the book of the law a cursory examination and seeing that it was very important, Shaphan took the book to Josiah and read it aloud to the king.

Q: How was this book found?

A: The "book of the law" was not the writings of the prophets but the book of the Mosaic Law, the Pentateuch. Probably the Book of Deuteronomy—and possibly the original—was found in the form of a scroll when heathen idols and idolatrous items were being cleaned out of the Temple. In that book, Moses prophesied how the people would depart from the Lord and how their unfaithfulness and dereliction would necessitate harsh judgment on the nation.

Presumably the book was found in one of the storerooms, for storage cubicles were on both sides of the Temple. (For example, each floor of Ezekiel's Temple will have 30 rooms, and there are three floors.) These rooms were of reasonable size and something like a locker for storing food, clothing, trophies of war (like the sword David used to slay Goliath), etc. Some of the rooms even served as sleeping quarters, among other purposes. Although these side chambers appeared to be part of the Temple proper, they were separate, for the beams did not extend into the Holy or the Most Holy.

Finding the hidden scroll was providential, for young Josiah was struck to the heart when a portion of Deuteronomy was read. Hearing the words further energized him. He rent his clothes and wept, being even more determined to complete the cleansing work (verse 19).

Q: Wasn't the Law put in the side of the Ark of the Covenant back in the wilderness?

A: Yes. However, hundreds of years later, David brought the Ark to Jerusalem from northern Israel and put it in temporary quarters, awaiting the building of the Temple. When Solomon built the Temple, the Ark was put in the Most Holy, but at that time, only the two stone tablets of the Law were in it, for the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded were missing. Moreover, after centuries, Hezekiah courageously destroyed the brazen serpent on the pole, which dated back to the days in the wilderness, because the people were worshipping it instead of the unseen God.

2 Kings 22:12 And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,

2 Kings 22:13 Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

2 Kings 22:14 So Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

2 Kings 22:15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

2 Kings 22:16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

2 Kings 22:17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

2 Kings 22:18 But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard;

2 Kings 22:19 Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD.

2 Kings 22:20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

Josiah instructed Hilkiyah, Shaphan, Ahikam, etc., to go and inquire about the people's disobedience and God's wrath. Notice that they consulted Huldah the prophetess, a *woman*.

There were at least five male contemporary prophets, such as Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Nahum, but a prophetess was asked, probably because she was conveniently nearby in a certain school right in Jerusalem. (Incidentally, Isaiah was off the scene by this time, for he had been sawn in two during Manasseh's reign.) Huldah must have had a previous reputation for virtue and righteousness. (We are reminded of Deborah.) Therefore, Hilkiah and the others must have felt that Huldah was advanced and could give good information. One of the closed gates on the south side of Jerusalem is called the Gate of Huldah the Prophetess.

Notice Huldah's response when the men presented the matter to her and sought information. They did not tell her who sent the inquiry, but she knew, showing that she was a seeress, a prophetess. Her words were, "To the *king of Judah* which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him...." The high priest (the theologian, as it were) was bypassed in favor of her counsel from God. Huldah dwelled in Jerusalem in the "college," which may have been a school of the prophets.

Huldah spoke in a very affirmative manner—with no wavering—from the standpoint of what God had seen of Josiah's reaction. "Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself ... and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD." Because of Josiah's humility, concern, and tender heart, God would not bring the judgment in his day. However, Judah would become "a desolation and a curse"; that is, Jerusalem would be emptied of inhabitants, and the Temple would be destroyed.

Moreover, Huldah said that Josiah would go to his grave "in peace" and not see "all the evil" that God would bring upon Judah. Josiah died 22 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. His death took place after he was wounded in a battle at Megiddo when the king of Egypt fought against the king of Assyria. Josiah was brought back mortally wounded to Jerusalem, where he died in peace. With calmness of mind and no pain or agony, he probably felt his life peacefully ebb away with family gathered around him. Josiah had disobeyed in some respects in going to that battle, but he died "in peace"—peace of heart, spirit, and conscience—and without fear.

2 Kings 23:1 And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

2 Kings 23:2 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 23:3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

2 Kings 23:4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.

2 Kings 23:5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the

planets, and to all the hosts of heaven.

2 Kings 23:6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

After the “book of the covenant [law]” was read to King Josiah, he read it (particularly Deuteronomy) to the people. Next Josiah made a covenant of obedience to God, to which the people agreed. He ordered everything that smacked of idolatry to be removed and also the priests who had sanctioned the false worship. His actions in separating out the priests would have caused a lot of hurt feelings, but Josiah was firm, like Ezra years later, in decreeing reforms. The sun, moon, stars, and signs of the zodiac were all worshipped.

While, to a certain extent, trees were in the outer court of the Lord, the word “grove” referred to a particular carved, gilded wooden statue of Ashtoreth, a female goddess, that was in the Temple at this time. Josiah removed from the Temple precincts both the statue and the priests who were involved in that worship. The statue of Ashtoreth, as well as the vessels made for Ashtoreth, Baal, and all the host of heaven, was burned outside the city of Jerusalem in the fields near the brook Kidron. The ashes were stamped to powder and then carried to Bethel, one of the rival places of worship established by Jeroboam after the death of Solomon. Bethel had its own cemetery because people customarily liked to be buried near the object of their reverence. Accordingly, ashes from the idols were taken to Bethel and thrown “upon the graves of the children of the people” to further defile them. Josiah wanted to cleanse the land so that the Jews would worship the one true unseen God and not statues fashioned by man. As one of the Ten Commandments, God had said, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ... [and] bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God” (Exod. 20:4,5).

In the King James Version, the Hebrew-to-English translation hides some of the indelicate objects of fertility, etc., that were used in the heathen religions and hence were destroyed by Josiah. Objects of fecundity that have been found by archaeologists were very crude, but as time went on, they became more and more lifelike and resulted in statuary for sex worship.

2 Kings 23:7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

2 Kings 23:8 And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man’s left hand at the gate of the city.

2 Kings 23:9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

2 Kings 23:10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

The worship of Molech with children being burned alive continued up to a very late date.

Q: Were Hinnom and Gehenna the same place?

A: Yes, they were two names for the same valley southwest of Jerusalem. That ravine was the

garbage dump for the city, and as garbage was added daily, fires burned continually, creating a stench. A statue of Molech, the fire god, was there in Tophet, probably being placed where the wind did not drift and carry the offensive odor. As a stigma, the corpses of prisoners were cast into Gehenna, for the individuals were considered disreputable and unworthy of an honorable burial. Thus not only garbage but also the *dead* bodies of criminals were thrown into Gehenna. In contrast, children were passed to Molech and burned *alive*. Imagine being a parent and seeing your child roasted alive as a supposed noble sacrifice! Heathen worship is characterized by torture, fear, terror, and sadistic and hedonistic practices.

Comment: To the Molech worshipper, Gehenna was considered a special place, but to the faithful Israelite, it was a garbage dump.

Reply: Yes. Molech worship and the ever-burning fires of Gehenna have led to confusion regarding hellfire and torment. Bible scholars and some in the nominal system find the thought of hellfire repugnant, for they know of the practice of casting corpses on the burning garbage dump. Hence they use the word Gehenna, grave, or something else to cover up the thought of hellfire, which is blasphemy. Such practices of torture did not even come into God's mind, yet some churches still teach hellfire today (Jer. 32:35).

2 Kings 23:11 And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

2 Kings 23:12 And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

2 Kings 23:13 And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

2 Kings 23:14 And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

Good King Josiah continued to rid the land of false worship. He took away the horses that kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun god, which had various names. The horses were right in the Temple precincts, being underneath in Solomon's stables. If a person on the south side of the Holy City looked northward, the spacious stables were underground on the right half of the southern side. A few of the stalls and posts with rings remain to this day. Solomon was particularly admonished not to acquire horses, but he disobeyed.

Josiah destroyed the "altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, ... and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts" of the Temple; that is, he destroyed the altars that were instituted by the *evil* kings Ahaz and Manasseh. In this drastic housecleaning of removing the horse stables and the altars, Josiah acted courageously, not fearing opposition from the populace. Earlier we had read about the altar Ahaz saw in Damascus and had copied and put in Solomon's Temple in lieu of the authorized Brazen Altar (2 Kings 16:10-16).

Josiah defiled "the high places that were before Jerusalem" on the right of the "mount of corruption." King Solomon had built these high places for Ashtoreth (the abomination of the Zidonians), and for Chemosh (the abomination of the Moabites), and for Milcom (the

abomination of the children of Ammon). Thus three different foreign heathen influences had been mixed into the Hebrew worship. The Zidonians were from Sidon in Lebanon, while the Ammonites and the Moabites, descendants of Lot, were northeast and east, respectively, of the Dead Sea.

Josiah also cut down the groves and emptied sepulchres, using the bones to desecrate heathen altars. Probably the graves that were emptied belonged to disreputable individuals—such as those who were guilty of intermarriage.

What does the expression “before Jerusalem ... on the right hand of the mount of corruption” signify? Maps are usually drawn with their orientation toward the north. Therefore, if a person viewed the Temple from the south, the right side was to the east, the front of the structure. In addition, the Olivet range was on the “right.” There were different knolls on that range, and the “mount of corruption” was so-called because the influence of the evil idols of alien peoples detracted from the worship of Jehovah. When Solomon’s wives had requested that an area be set aside for their idol worship, the mount of corruption was the result.

2 Kings 23:15 Moreover the altar that was at Beth-el, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove.

2 Kings 23:16 And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

2 Kings 23:17 Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el.

2 Kings 23:18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

Josiah destroyed the altar and the high place at Bethel, which Jeroboam had made many years earlier. Graves were opened, and the exhumed bones were used to desecrate the altar. A “man of God” had predicted in Jeroboam’s day that a man named Josiah would come on the scene and take this action. Josiah providentially saw a title on a particular grave and inquired what it meant. Now, many years later, the men of the city still knew about the prophecy and told Josiah, who gave orders not to open that sepulchre, which contained the bones of two prophets. The account of the prophecy is recorded in 1 Kings 13:1-5,11-18, as follows:

“And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

“And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee.

“And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

“And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him.

And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

“The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD....

“Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

“And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah.

“And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass; and he rode thereon,

“And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am.

“Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

“And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:

“For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

“He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.”

The result was that the prophet who despoiled the altar of Jeroboam in Bethel was slain by a lion. The bones of the original prophet who came from Judah, as well as the bones of this other prophet from Samaria, were left alone in the sepulchre. Like Cyrus, Josiah's name was prophesied long before his birth. Jeroboam, who had led the ten tribes in an insurrection and secession from the two tribes, had built the altar at Bethel to keep the people from going to Jerusalem to worship.

Comment: Josiah was principled. He was not just bent on destruction but made proper distinctions.

Despite giving wrong advice and lying, the prophet of Samaria claimed to be a prophet of the Lord, and he was in sympathy with what the man of God from Judah had done. The Samarian prophet wanted so much to entertain the prophet from Judah that he caused the latter to disobey the injunction not to turn to the right or the left until he returned home. At any rate, the prophet of Samaria laid the bones of the man of God either in or beside his own sepulchre (1 Kings 13:30). Whether this striking account is typical remains to be seen.

2 Kings 23:19 And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el.

2 Kings 23:20 And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah's housecleaning included not only Judah but also Bethel, the chief place of idolatry in the

northern kingdom, and the cities of Samaria in the former territory of the ten tribes.

2 Kings 23:21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.

2 Kings 23:22 Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

2 Kings 23:23 But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.

Josiah commanded a Passover to be kept according to the Law. There was not the equal of that Passover from the Period of the Judges through the Period of the Kings of Israel and Judah. The fervor and enthusiasm in the celebration of this particular Passover surpassed that of all others except for the first Passover in Egypt.

Jeremiah began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, which was five years before this Passover in the eighteenth year (Jer. 1:2). Jeremiah had a long ministry that continued through several kings. 2 Chronicles 35:1-19 is devoted to this Passover. We will read the account, starting with verses 1-8.

“Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.

“And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD,

“And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel,

“And prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son.

“And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and after the division of the families of the Levites.

“So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

“And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these were of the king's substance.

“And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred small cattle, and three hundred oxen.”

Comment: King Josiah gave many animals of his own substance.

Reply: He probably did so because it was not convenient, for one reason or another, for the people to have a sufficiency of offerings.

Q: In verse 3 of 2 Chronicles 35, does Josiah's command that the Ark be brought into the Temple indicate that it was out of position?

A: Yes, it was probably out of place. Just as Ahaz had moved the Brazen Altar in the inner court, so other previous evil kings had made innovations. Apparently, the moving of the Ark of the Covenant was one of those innovations.

Comment: To move the Ark was bold disobedience, for that article of furniture was the very symbol of God's presence.

Reply: Over a period of time, the Israelites forgot the instructions of the Old Testament. Of course this was the original Ark, which was carried with staves. Josiah wanted the Ark to be positioned permanently in its proper place. However, Jeremiah prophesied in great detail as to what would happen subsequently to Judah and the Temple.

Under King Josiah, the scroll of the Old Testament was found and read. Thus for many years, the Scriptures had been hidden, and during that time, the people followed traditions more than the Lord's Word direct. Just as the Catholic Church has a catechism instead of the Bible, so other rabbinical writings have replaced the Torah and the book of the prophets. The people did not want to read too much about the prophets because they would be continually reminded of their past disobedience. Therefore, the Talmud, the Mishnah, and other writings were used like a catechism, which contained selected readings that were agreeable to them. More modern translations of the Hebrew Testament are called the half Torah. The Pentateuch is left intact with selected readings of the other books of the Old Testament. The half Torah is like half truth, namely, portions of Scripture that speak comfortably.

We will continue the reading with verses 9-13 of 2 Chronicles 35.

“Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen.

“So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment.

“And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites flayed them.

“And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen.

“And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them speedily among all the people.”

The meat was prepared and distributed so that the people could eat the Passover. However, they could not strictly eat the lambs as they did at the time of the Exodus, for thousands of animals were being offered on King Solomon's altar, which was of limited size.

The burnt offerings were removed because other animals, in addition to the lamb sacrifices, had to be offered on the Passover. With the altar being limited in size, the Passover lamb was roasted according to the ordinance, but other offerings, which the people could eat, were prepared in a different way; namely, they were sodden. In other words, besides the burnt offerings, which were not to be eaten, there were meal offerings, heave offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, peace offerings, etc., some of which were treated differently and were eaten.

Verses 14-19 read as follows:

“And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering of burnt offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron.

“And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king’s seer; and the porters waited at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

“So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah.

“And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.

“And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

“In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.”

Normally the Temple closed at 3 p.m., but in this case, the hours were extended so that all the Levites and priests could participate. “All the [Passover] service of the LORD was prepared the *same day*.” That was quite a feat to accomplish in one day!

There had been no Passover like this one since the days of Samuel, the prophet whose writings continued up to the time of David, the second king of Israel. Thus the Passover Josiah observed was very unusual, and the people cooperated. However, conditions changed quickly through the fickleness of the people when the chief character was removed from the scene, for after Josiah’s death, certain idolatrous practices and habits returned.

Q: To whom does the pronoun “they” refer in verse 14? “And afterward *they* made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron were [busy] ... until night.”

A: The Levites flayed the animals and did the manual labor and preparation, whereas the priests put the animals on the altar. The priests supervised the Levites and then had to handle the animals on the altar. There was more than one priest on this particular occasion when thousands of animals were offered.

In effect, the Passover was a time of rejoicing, with singing being done by the sons of Asaph. Some of David’s Psalms were prepared for Asaph, and now, at this very late date, his children were still the singers—like a choral society that kept in practice for several centuries. Josiah renewed the practice. Thus there was singing, and there was eating, for only a portion of the animals was offered, burnt, dedicated, or given to the priest. The remainder of the animals was turned back to the people for a feast. Similarly, the Israelites at the time of the Exodus ate of the Passover lamb until it was entirely consumed.

Thus the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (or Passover) was properly observed. Josiah’s zeal was infectious. His boldness and energy in cleansing the land and changing the practices filled the people with enthusiasm, and they followed his leadership.

2 Kings 23:24 Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem,

did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 23:25 And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

Josiah will certainly be an Ancient Worthy, for *no king* before him turned so fully to the Lord with heart, soul, and might. However, David was a man after God's own heart (1 Kings 14:8; Acts 13:22), so how would we compare the two kings?

Comment: David did commit a serious sin, but his contrition and repentance were so genuine and heartfelt that the Lord appreciated his attitude.

Reply: King David was *greater* than King Josiah, but Josiah was a *better* man, for the latter did not sin the same way. They both had zeal, but Josiah led a purer life, for David had a blemished past. However, David was greater because of the nature of his character.

Comment: David excelled in many areas—as a naturalist, a warrior, an architect, a musician, etc.

Reply: Yes, he had more talents. If two people are equally faithful and zealous, the one with more talents gets a higher grade because he has overcome more temptations. The one who remains faithful with more of this world's goods—intellectual qualities, money, power, or something else—will receive a higher position. That is one of the lessons Jesus taught in the Parable of the Talents. The Christian is enticed to use his talents in illegitimate areas.

2 Kings 23:26 Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.

2 Kings 23:27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

2 Kings 23:28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 23:29 In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him.

2 Kings 23:30 And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

It was prophesied earlier that Josiah would die in peace. While he was mortally wounded in Megiddo, he was brought back and buried in his own sepulchre in Jerusalem. His life was a period of reconstruction, so from that sense too, he was in peace; that is, he did not live to see Judah again depart from the Lord.

Comment: 2 Chronicles 35:20-23 enriches the account by relating what Pharaoh-necho told Josiah. "After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against [the city of] Carchemish by [the] Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But

he [Pharaoh] sent ambassadors to him [Josiah], saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded." Pharaoh advised that because the battle was not with Josiah, the latter should return, for God had told Pharaoh to go in haste to fight the king of Assyria. However, Josiah would not listen and was mortally wounded as a result. It is interesting that God sometimes speaks through the unconsecrated, through others than His people. Examples are Balaam's ass, Caiaphas, and Pharaoh-necho. After Josiah's death, this Pharaoh was subsequently defeated—probably by Nabopolassar, the father of King Nebuchadnezzar.

2 Kings 23:31 Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

2 Kings 23:32 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

2 Kings 23:33 And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

2 Kings 23:34 And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

The successor of Josiah was Jehoahaz (Shallum), his son, who reigned for only three months yet was accounted evil. Why was he so regarded in such a short time? He had probably manifested an evil character even in Josiah's reign, and the evil tendencies blossomed as soon as he became king. Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt and died there. Pharaoh-necho not only made Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, the king of Judah in his stead but also put the southern kingdom (Judah and Benjamin) under subjection and tribute.

The succession of Judah's last five kings before Babylonian captivity was Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Their reigns were as follows:

<u>Name of king</u>	<u>Length of reign</u>
Josiah	31 years
Jehoahaz (Shallum)	3 months
Jehoiakim (Eliakim)	11 years
Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah)	3 months
Zedekiah (Mattaniah)	11 years

Note: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah were all sons of Josiah.

2 Kings 23:35 And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-nechoh.

2 Kings 23:36 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of

Pedaiah of Rumah.

2 Kings 23:37 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

Jehoiakim was also evil. The time was nearing 606 BC, when Jerusalem and the Temple would be laid waste.

Comment: Jehoahaz was younger, but he reigned first, ahead of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. “And the sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum” (1 Chron. 3:15).

Zechariah 12:11-14 is a prophecy of the future based on the mourning that took place when Josiah died. “In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.” The “great mourning” at Josiah’s death is compared with the *intense* mourning of the Holy Remnant when, in Jacob’s Trouble, the latter recognize that Jesus is their Messiah. They will mourn because Israel, as a people, rejected Jesus. With Josiah, the mourning was along another line, yet in spite of the great and intense emotion and feeling of loss, it is remarkable that the people turned to evil and departed from the Lord in such a *short* time. While Josiah was an extraordinary and bold reformer, the people were so deep in sin from preceding kings (especially Ahaz and Manasseh) that the cleansing was only on the surface. Josiah brought the people back to the original purity of following the Law, particularly the Passover, but when he died, the Israelites right away began to fall apart as a people. Therefore, when the account states that God had mercy in not bringing the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in the days of Josiah, the irrevocable judgments were just delayed.

Comment: 2 Chronicles 35:24,25 tells of the mourning for Josiah. “And *all* Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and *all* the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.” Songs of lamentation were sung for years.

Reply: When Josiah’s body was taken back to Jerusalem, the national mourning went on and on. He was even memorialized in song.

Although the majority of a people may not be wickedly inclined, a strong, organized minority can exert a great influence for evil over the populace as a whole. Josiah, with his strong, concerted efforts, produced a benevolent cleansing influence on the nation, but the nation as a whole was so steeped in corruption and idolatry that the people could not shake off those shackles. Thus, shortly after he died, the people relapsed into their former condition. Leadership can be very significant for either good or evil.

2 Kings 24:1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim’s predecessor, was taken captive to Egypt. After that, Nebuchadnezzar got great power as the king of Babylon, so a different power now dominated Judah, and Jehoiakim became a vassal for three years. Then he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.

2 Kings 24:2 And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the

Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

A sizable force of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites was sent down to intimidate and subjugate Judah.

2 Kings 24:3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;

2 Kings 24:4 And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.

Notice that punishment was *now* coming because of *Manasseh's sins years earlier*—even though subsequent kings rebelled against Egypt and Babylon. The judgment was delayed for a time, but it was inevitable ultimately because of Manasseh's numerous sins and the innocent blood that he shed.

Comment: 2 Kings 21:11,16 reads, “Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: ... Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.”

Reply: His sins were very extensive in order to make this judgment irrevocable.

2 Kings 24:5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2 Kings 24:6 So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

Jehoiakim reigned for 11 years, but little is written here about his reign. At his death, his son Jehoiachin reigned in his stead. Jehoiachin's other names were Jeconiah and Coniah.

2 Kings 24:7 And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

A change of power went to Nebuchadnezzar, for before that, Egypt had predominated and put pressure on Judah. Now the king of Babylon reigned from the “river of Egypt,” which was the wadi El Arish on the border of Egypt near the Gaza Strip, all the way up to the Euphrates in the northern part of Lebanon. Nebuchadnezzar's territorial control included Judah as a vassal state. Incidentally, after King Josiah, all of Judah's kings were more or less under alien domination.

2 Kings 24:8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

2 Kings 24:9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

Like Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin reigned for only three months and was evil. Then Jehoiachin was taken captive to Babylon.

Comment: 2 Chronicles 36:9 lists Jehoiachin's age as eight when he began to reign, but here the correct age of 18 is given.

Reply: Yes, Scripture corrects itself. At age 18, Jehoiachin was considered old enough to incur responsibility as an evil king.

While the Bible is the inspired Word of God, some interpolations and marginal readings crept into the text over the years. However, Scripture is often self-correcting, and such impediments are designed to be barriers to the worldly-wise, who cannot accept the Bible as God's Word and, therefore, do not study it. Being hypercritical and narrow-minded, they do not view the Bible as a *whole* for its authenticity. Rejecting the Scriptures because of some small imperfection, they precipitate a judgment that can affect their destiny or welfare. In contrast, the searcher sees that the Bible is a sizable record from olden times and wants to investigate further.

The same principle applies to the Lord's people, who are not perfect. We are not to judge by one action, especially if the matter is picayune. A hypercritical nature can prevent one from seeing that the Lord is using an individual, particularly in the case of a presumed criticism made by others.

The incident with Moses and the leprous hand teaches the lesson of an imperfect priesthood. As a sign, Moses was told to put his hand into his bosom and then remove it. Upon removal, the hand was leprous. Then he was instructed to put his hand back into his bosom and take it out—and the hand was whole (Exod. 4:6,7). The Pastor gave a good explanation in a *Reprint* article entitled "The Voices of the Three Signs." Following the judgment on Adam, mankind was imperfect, and so is the "priesthood," God's helping hand. Some look at the "leprous hand" and do not see the good that is being done. Through imperfect beings, God speaks to His people. Some can hear a person speak who is *filled* with wisdom, but if they hear *one* mistake, they see that mistake and forget the benefits. The same is true for the Lord's Word, prophets, and people. We must have a humble heart and search diligently, and we need to use reason and discretion in connection with judgment. Judgment is necessary in its place, but we are to weigh and analyze matters in order to render proper judgment. If a judge has only half of the facts, he cannot render a proper judgment; he needs to hear the testimony of both sides. The purpose of a trial is to collect all data and analyze it, and then try to come to a proper, reasonable, just verdict. In our training period on this side of the veil, we need to do the same.

Comment: Elders are responsible for hearing both sides when a problem occurs.

Comment: The Pastor was unfairly criticized by a person who combed through *thousands* of pages of *Reprint* articles to find a *few* statements to deride him for.

Reply: That individual had an improper spirit. Mistakes should be noticed and honestly faced and recognized, but judgment is another matter.

2 Kings 24:10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.

2 Kings 24:11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.

Verse 2 stated that various nations, in conjunction with some of the Chaldeans, came down and besieged Jerusalem. Now verse 10 says that the "servants of Nebuchadnezzar" came against Jerusalem. In other words, at this point, Nebuchadnezzar came *personally* against the city.

Apparently, he had been preoccupied with the death of his father, King Nabopolassar, and hence had not come earlier. The funeral procession, accession to the throne, etc., had to occur. Thus a change was beginning to take place in the kingdom of Babylon, for Nebuchadnezzar, the former captain of the army, had become the king.

2 Kings 24:12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

In the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he took Jehoiachin and his mother, servants, princes, and officers to Babylon.

2 Kings 24:13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.

2 Kings 24:14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

The Jews living back there would have been *greatly dismayed* to see Nebuchadnezzar's men cut, or strip off, the gold veneer on the furniture in the Temple. Of course the Candlestick of solid gold was taken in its entirety. After Nebuchadnezzar departed for Babylon with this booty, the stripped furniture and the missing article should have been an object lesson of humiliation to the priests, who entered the Holy. *God's* house and *God's* furniture had been despoiled—and *very visibly*. Until repairs could be made, the stripped furniture was a real eyesore and a remembrance that the despoliation had happened because of Judah's sins and evil doings.

Q: Daniel 1:1,2 refers to the besieging of Jerusalem in the days of Jehoiakim: "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with *part* of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god." If Nebuchadnezzar took only "part" of the vessels of the Temple, why does 2 Kings 24:13 state that he "carried out thence *all* the treasures of the house of the LORD ... and cut in pieces *all* the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD"?

A: The "all" refers to the gold and silver. Nebuchadnezzar did not want the wooden furniture, but he wanted all the gold and silver to melt down and remake into coins and other purposes. Vessels such as cups, which were made of solid gold or silver, were not melted down but were taken intact as trophies to put in the house of Babylon's god(s). To the rulership element, the vessels served as reminders of glorious victories, and they were displayed to the public on certain holidays. For example, King Belshazzar drank wine from the vessels of Solomon's Temple in honor of his gods. The confiscated gold, silver, and vessels were also used to mock the Jews. Thus Nebuchadnezzar took "all" in the sense of the "part" that was of real value to him.

Wise kings used some of the brilliant Jews as their ministers. Nebuchadnezzar took the elite—the educated, the wise, and the skilled—back to Babylon and left the poor and the common people in Judah. The 10,000 who were taken in the Jehoiachin captivity were the cream of the nation; they were skimmed off, as it were. Included in the "brain drain" were Daniel and the three Hebrew children.

Comment: At this time, Nebuchadnezzar concentrated on the gold and the silver. In Zedekiah's day, the brass was taken. "And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.... The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight. The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work" (2 Kings 25:13,14,16,17).

Reply: Yes. The brass included pillars and enormous vessels out in the court, such as the Laver.

The treasures go all the way back to Solomon's day—to "all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD." Now Nebuchadnezzar "carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths." He left only the ordinary servants and the common people of the land, who were of no special use in captivity. When Zedekiah subsequently came to the throne, having seen the taking of all these captives, he should have been humbled and thus motivated to call for a fast of national mourning and prayer, but that did not happen.

2 Kings 24:15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

2 Kings 24:16 And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar took strong warriors (men of war), skilled craftsmen, and nobility.

2 Kings 24:17 And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah king and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was Jehoiachin's uncle.

2 Kings 24:18 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

2 Kings 24:19 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

2 Kings 24:20 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Zedekiah began to reign at age 21 and reigned as an evil king for 11 years.

2 Kings 25:1 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

2 Kings 25:2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

2 Kings 25:3 And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

2 Kings 25:4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.

In the tenth month of Zedekiah's ninth year, Nebuchadnezzar began a siege against Jerusalem. In the fourth month of the eleventh year, the food supply was exhausted, and famine prevailed in the city. In other words, the siege lasted for about 1 1/2 years, at which time the famine broke the spirits of the people and the city was breached.

Then Zedekiah and his elite warriors tried to escape by way of the king's garden in the southern part of the city, somewhat near the Pool of Siloam, and go down toward the plains of Jericho, a very low elevation. Meanwhile, Edomites who were watching sent messages to the king of Babylon that Zedekiah was secretly trying to escape. Because the Edomites gloated over the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, they themselves were taken captive shortly afterward.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah both prophesied of this same period of time. While Ezekiel was among the captives of the ten-tribe kingdom in Babylon, he visually demonstrated what would happen in Jerusalem. In the dirt, he publicly made a model of a fort around Jerusalem and pretended he was using battering rams to break down the walls of the city. His actions were similar to someone on the beach building a sand castle or a fort.

2 Kings 25:5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

2 Kings 25:6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

2 Kings 25:7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

The Chaldean army pursued after Zedekiah and captured him in the plains of Jericho. He was taken up to Riblah, which was on the boundary line of Israel up near Hamath. There King Nebuchadnezzar put out his eyes, bound him in brass fetters, and carried him to Babylon. The prophecies seemed to contradict, for one said that Zedekiah would not see Babylon, and the other said he would be taken captive to Babylon. However, both prophecies were true, for he was taken blind to Babylon, where he died.

2 Kings 25:8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

2 Kings 25:9 And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

2 Kings 25:10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

2 Kings 25:11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away.

2 Kings 25:12 But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

Still in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, Nebuzar-adan, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, burned the Temple, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem. Moreover, the army of the Chaldees broke down the walls of the city. These walls were not repaired until 454 BC in Nehemiah's day—in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, which was far beyond the end of the 70 years' desolation of the land and Cyrus's decree to rebuild the Temple.

Despite all the bloodshed in 606 BC, the booty that was taken, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, Nebuchadnezzar showed some mercy to leave the poor of the land as vinedressers and husbandmen. Otherwise, the land would have become completely wild, sterile, and overgrown. Obviously, he felt that someday, after the Jews had learned a lesson, they might be returned to their land from Babylon. Meanwhile, the land would be cultivated, and the poor would have something to eat. However, God had different plans, for He wanted the land to be desolate for 70 years. Knowing the end from the beginning, He realized that the people would rebel and not submit, contrary to what Jeremiah had urged them to do.

2 Kings 25:13 And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

2 Kings 25:14 And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

2 Kings 25:15 And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.

2 Kings 25:16 The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

2 Kings 25:17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

Comment: What a huge task it was to take all this thick and heavy brass to Babylon!

Reply: Yes, but the metal was useful, so the Chaldees fragmented it as best they could for transport to Babylon. Just the Laver itself, being 30 cubits around, was tremendous in size. Of course this was high-quality, refined brass. All the beautiful workmanship was demolished for transportation purposes. The great loss and destruction were a judgment of the Lord on the people of Judah to impress in their memory, for recall when they were in captivity, the magnitude of the humiliation they had endured.

“Gold, in gold” and “silver, in silver” indicated valuable *alloys*, for the very precious things and vessels had been taken earlier in the Jehoiachin captivity. Most of the items now taken had been left behind in the court. However, some of the vessels might have been made in the

interim period between the Jehoiachin captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem; that is, some reparation work might have taken place.

2 Kings 25:18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

2 Kings 25:19 And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city:

2 Kings 25:20 And Nebuzar-adan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:

2 Kings 25:21 And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.

Nebuzar-adan took the chief priest, the second priest, the three keepers of the door, an officer, five men close to King Zedekiah, the principal scribe, and 60 men to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, and the king slew them there. Riblah was "in the land of Hamath," that is, north of Israel.

2 Kings 25:22 And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.

2 Kings 25:23 And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

2 Kings 25:24 And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.

2 Kings 25:25 But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.

2 Kings 25:26 And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

In 606 BC, Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah a puppet governor over the vinedressers and the poor who were left in the land. Subsequently an insurrection arose, and Gedaliah was slain, causing further judgment to come on this remnant, which had not been carried away to Babylon. Ishmael and the ten men who were with him did despite not only to Gedaliah and the Jews who were with him at Mizpah but also to some Babylonians who were stationed there with Gedaliah. In fear, the remnant fled to Egypt, and Jeremiah accompanied them.

Comment: Gedaliah and Jeremiah had told the people to *submit* to the king of Babylon, but the advice was ignored.

Reply: Yes. Jeremiah told those of Judah that the captivity would last 70 years, so they would be there a long time and should build homes and have children. Instead the people did not

abide by what was an apparent judgment from God because of their sins.

The Chaldeans were a radical element of the Babylonians. Habakkuk called them a “bitter and hasty nation” (Hab. 1:6).

2 Kings 25:27 And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;

2 Kings 25:28 And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

2 Kings 25:29 And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

2 Kings 25:30 And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

Jehoiachin had reigned only three months when Nebuchadnezzar took him hostage to Babylon. In the thirty-seventh year of his captivity, Jehoiachin was released from prison and given honor by Evil-merodach. Why was he released at that time and allowed to partake of the king’s table? Probably Nebuchadnezzar had died, and Evil-merodach was starting his reign. As is customary in many nations, a new leader often issues a decree to free all political prisoners, or he shows some benefaction or amnesty to introduce his reign as a fresh start, thereby disassociating himself from any responsibility of his predecessor.

Comment: Jehoiachin is part of Jesus’ lineage, so the Lord overruled his release from prison.

Reply: Yes. Incidentally, Ezekiel began his ministry at age 30, which was the fifth year of Jehoiachin’s captivity. “In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin’s captivity, The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him” (Ezek. 1:2,3).

Q: Was Nebuchadnezzar the father, Evil-merodach the son, and Belshazzar the grandson?

A: Yes.

“And [Evil-merodach] changed his [Jehoiachin’s] prison garments: and he [Jehoiachin] did eat bread continually before him [Evil-merodach] all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.” Jehoiachin was taken from the dungeon to eat at the king’s table, and he was given a daily allowance. In this opposite experience, he was elevated higher than any of the other captive kings with him in Babylon. Referring to this elevation, verse 27 states that “Evil-merodach ... did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison.” Evidently, Evil-merodach had released several other captive kings as well, so what might have led to such high recognition of Jehoiachin? Jeremiah had warned Judah that if the evil ways continued, the Lord would raise up a judgment against them from the north—a “lion” (Nebuchadnezzar) would come out of the thicket and devour them (Jer. 4:7). Jeremiah also advised the Jews to build houses in Babylon, for they would be there for 70 years. Of course Nebuchadnezzar had heard of Jeremiah’s words, so when Jerusalem was captured, he spared the prophet’s life and gave him the choice of going to Babylon, where some kindness would be shown, or remaining in the

land with the vinedressers. Jeremiah chose the latter option and stayed with Gedaliah and then fled to Egypt with the remnant after Gedaliah's assassination.

Comment: Jeremiah's own people considered him a traitor because of his advice.

Reply: Hence they put him in a cistern just before 606 BC where he was in mire up to his waist. The man who risked his life to pull Jeremiah out with a rope was an Ethiopian eunuch.

The Book of Jeremiah picks up the history after Gedaliah and tells what happened when the vinedressers went to Egypt. The Book of Daniel tells about conditions that existed in Babylon during the 70-year captivity. At the end of the Babylonian captivity, Daniel prayed, and Cyrus issued his decree.