

Verse 45. See Ch. 14: 19 for comments on *chronicles*.

Verse 46. The *sodomites* are described at Ch. 14: 24.

Verses 47-49. This paragraph is parenthetical in thought, specifying some of the "acts" of Jehoshaphat. *No king in Edom* means no man there was ruling in his own right. 2 Sam. 8: 14 shows the subjection of the land of Edom to the children of Israel. This *deputy* was appointed by Jehoshaphat, and served in the enterprise connected with the plan to go after the gold, which failed. A son of Ahab had offered to furnish servants to go on the expedition, but the offer was refused. We are not told whether that fact had anything to do with the failure of the venture, or not.

Verse 50. Chronologically, this verse belongs immediately after V. 46. *Slept* is explained at Ch. 2: 10. The successor to Jehoshaphat is named in connection with his death, which is the usual form of report. The incidents of Jehoram's own reign, however, will not begin until several chapters in the next book have been reached.

Verse 51. The reign of Ahab's son is dated from a certain year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. See Ch. 12: 17 for comments on this point.

Verses 52, 53. These verses are concise and sum up the accounting for the wicked reign of this son of Ahab. It was because he followed in the counsel of his parents, both of whom were wicked, and of Jeroboam the first king of Israel. Many of the personal acts of Ahaziah are recorded in the book of 2 Kings which will immediately follow.

## 2 KINGS 1

Verse 1. David had brought the Moabites under tribute to the children of Israel. (2 Sam. 8: 2.) They continued in that relation until after the death of Ahab, at which time they rebelled and made war. This verse barely introduces the subject of the situation, then the writer drops it to insert certain other happenings among noted individuals. It will be taken up again at Ch. 3: 4, 5.

Verse 2. The injury that Ahaziah received by his fall was very severe. It was not immediately fatal, however, and the outcome was uncertain. In other words, the condition was apparently such that superhuman information was thought necessary to deter-

mine it. Baal was the general name of an idolatrous deity, and zebub was a special one located at Ekron, a Philistine city. To this place the wounded man ordered his messengers to go for the information on his case.

Verse 3. Had there been no man of God available, it would still have been an insult to God for one of his professed servants to recognize an idol god. The prophet Elijah was told by the angel to intercept the messengers of Ahaziah. *Is it not because*, etc., is in the form of a question. The meaning of it is an accusation of ignoring the true God of Israel, which was a deep offense to Him.

Verse 4. We do not know whether Ahaziah's injury was necessarily fatal; it might have been. But in whatever case the victim was involved, the outcome was as yet hidden from his knowledge. The information was thus given him by the prophet that he would die.

Verses 5, 6. The early return of his messengers caused Ahaziah to ask why. They gave a true account of their meeting with a man.

Verses 7, 8. *An hairy man* does not mean merely that he had a thick growth of hair, but the lexicon describes it as meaning it was in a ruffled and unkempt condition. Being apart from society much of the time, Elijah took this habit. Ahaziah had evidently seen him and recognized the description.

Verse 9. The king had previously known of Elijah's authority, else he would not have sent to him for assistance in this predicament of his. But the whole procedure indicated he appealed to the true God as a last resort only. We are not told just what form of speech the captain had been instructed to use in his request. He used the wrong one, however, as we can see; one of arrogance instead of humility. The words *man of God* acknowledge Elijah to be a servant of the true God, hence there was no excuse for the disrespectful demand expressed. *Come down* was a dictatorial expression, which did not recognize their master as being the one in need of aid, but rather, that Elijah was the one to be benefited by the occasion. The information had already been given Ahaziah from Elijah that the injury was to end fatally. It means, therefore, that Ahaziah thought to influence the prophet to reverse the decision and cause his recovery.

Verse 10. Turning the abject acknowledgement of the captain into a taunt, Elijah called upon that very God over him to destroy the whole group with fire.

Verses 11, 12. The scene with the first captain and his 50 men was repeated in duplicate, except the word *quickly* was added, thereby making it still more arrogant.

Verses 13, 14. Nothing has been said about spectators at the first two transactions. We know there was some means by which it was known what took place, for the third captain mentioned the matter in his pleading address to Elijah. The only request that is recorded was on behalf of him and his men. We know, however, that Elijah was requested to go with the men, from what the angel said to him in the next verse.

Verse 15. The angel gave Elijah assurance of his life, and on that he went to the king of Israel.

Verse 16. We still do not know what might have been the natural outcome of Ahaziah's injury. The prophet of God could have healed him with divine help regardless of the severity of the case. But the edict that the king was to die was due to his attempt to consult an idolatrous god. This conclusion is based on the fact that, after referring to the matter of consultation with the idolatrous god, Elijah said *therefore*.

Verse 17. The same name was common to more than one person in ancient times, even as it is today. In the line of rulers over Judah was a man named Jehoram. In his second year, began the reign of another Jehoram over Israel. The last named Jehoram was a brother to Ahaziah, who died of his injury. The reason this Jehoram reigned over Israel is stated, *because he (Ahaziah) had no sons*.

Verse 18. For *chronicles* see the comments at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

## 2 KINGS 2

Verse 1. Genesis 5: 22-24; Heb. 11: 5 gives account of Enoch's being taken from the earth without death; the Lord will do the same thing with Elijah. There is no statement in the Bible that shows why God did this to these men, when the edict had gone forth that all men must die. (Heb. 9: 27.) It is an accepted idea, however, that an exception to a rule will

emphasize and establish the rule. Elijah and Elisha had been close to each other, and the latter had been already designated as the prophet to take the place of the former. (1 Ki. 19: 16.) Considered mechanically, a whirlwind would be the ideal kind of storm by which to draw a man upward. It would affect a comparatively small area, and leave the persons and things nearby undisturbed. That will explain how Elisha could be near enough to see and talk with Elijah at the time.

Verse 2. Elijah knew that he was soon to leave the earth. Just why he appeared eager to get away from Elisha, we are not told. He mentioned more than one point to which the Lord was sending him; one after the other. His suggestions for Elisha to tarry at one of the given places intimated that the distance they would have to travel was great, and it was not necessary for him to make that journey just because Elijah had to. The Biblical statement at the close of this verse is one that is common in the Scriptures. It is as if he said, "As surely as the Lord and I are living, that sure it is that," etc. There was no principle against their traveling together, hence they did so for the present.

Verse 3. *Sons of the prophets* means the men who were pupils under the older ones, being trained in the work of prophets. They had some communication directly with the Lord, and had received some information regarding the present program for Elijah. Their term *thy master* was in respect for the seniority of Elijah over Elisha in the line of national prophets. (1 Ki. 19: 16.) Elisha also had information that Elijah was to leave him. That was an unpleasant thought and he did not want to be reminded of it, hence his demand for these student prophets to hold their peace about it.

Verse 4. Elijah named another distant point, and suggested that Elisha not go any farther. He received the same kind of answer he did before, so they traveled on.

Verse 5. The *sons of the prophets* at Jericho had received the same information about Elijah that had been given to the ones at Bethel. In answer to their reminder for Elisha, they received the same order that the others had.

Verse 6. For the third time, Elijah suggested that Elisha halt in his journey, and received the same kind

of an answer. One difference in the last instance was, the place to which Elijah was to go (Jordan) was more indefinite as to exact location.

Verse 7. The procedure of the great prophets was arousing the interest of the student prophets. Fifty of them followed at seeing distance as they arrived at the Jordan.

Verse 8. Moses and Aaron used a rod in connection with their miracles. (Ex. 7: 17.) Jesus used clay in healing the blind man. (John 9: 6, 7.) Elijah used the mantle in forcing a passage across the Jordan. There was an important point in such performances. Had something been used that might have a physical or logical relation to the result desired and obtained, it might have been claimed that such was the cause. But since these things could have nothing to do with the actual problem the conclusion is clear, that the result was obtained through divine power.

Verse 9. Elisha has persistently refused to separate from Elijah, and he was no longer asked to do so. Let us note that Elijah did not tell Elisha he could have anything he wanted. This kind of distinction was made in the case of Solomon at Gibeon. (1 Ki. 3: 5.) Mathematically speaking, it would be impossible for one to receive more than all of another's spirit. We are sure that Elisha received that since he was to take the place of Elijah. (1 Ki. 19: 16.) The thought, then, is figurative. It was a desire to receive abundantly of the same spirit that had been possessed by Elijah. The request was an exalted one, and not one that looked for personal gain.

Verse 10. A thing could be *hard* or difficult or unusual, yet not wrong or impossible. That which Elisha asked for was very rare, but was right, and was promised to him on condition. Previously, Elijah had designated certain places he expected to be and asked to be left alone. Now the attitude has been changed and Elisha was placed on his guard, to be always on the alert lest his master slip away from him. There is no explanation given for the change in Elijah's attitude.

Verse 11. *Parted them* means the fiery chariot separated the two prophets. *Went up into heaven*. The Old Testament uses the same original word for "heaven," whether the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd heaven is meant. The connection in each case must be relied on

to determine which is meant. It was the first heaven, or domain of the atmosphere that received Elijah as far as Elisha could see. From other considerations, however, we understand that he was taken to the 3rd heaven, the abode of God. (Matt. 17: 3.) There is another important thought about this. Elijah had to leave the earth in order to get to heaven where God is. That disproves a doctrine among men that all the heaven there is to be is on the earth. The word translated *fire* is defined in the lexicon as having both a literal and figurative meaning. The case at hand means the chariot and horses were of a flaming or fiery appearance.

Verse 12. The word for father is so rendered in most places, but by "chief" in a few other places. It was evidently used in that sense by Elisha. As chief person among the children of Israel, he would mean to Elisha as much as all the other chariots and their drivers. With such a loss to him and his people, he expressed his grief by a well known custom of rending his garment.

Verse 13. A popular saying supposed to be based on this circumstance is, that the mantle of Elijah fell on Elisha, when people are moralizing on the subject of one person's committing his work to another. A careful reading will show that to be erroneous. The mantle had fallen to the ground, and Elisha picked it up voluntarily.

Verse 14. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah* was said in the sense of calling upon that God. As Elisha made that call he also used the same mantle and for the same purpose as did Elijah in V. 8. See the comments at that verse. After invoking, successfully, the mantle, Elisha recrossed the Jordan back into Canaan proper.

Verse 15. Jericho is near the Jordan, and that was the place from which the *sons of the prophets* had stood to view afar off. (V. 7). By this we learn of the place where the two great prophets had crossed the river Jordan. When these *sons of the prophets* saw the miracle that Elisha did with the mantle, they concluded it was done through the same spirit that Elijah had possessed. With due respect for the successor of the great prophet Elijah, these young prophets bowed before Elisha.

Verse 16. The sons of the prophets had twice told Elisha (Vs. 3, 5) that his master was to be taken from his

*head that day.* That meant merely that he would be deprived of his master's personal association, but no evidence is apparent that they knew it was to be permanent; neither did they know that he was to leave the earth. All of this explains why they were so concerned about his bodily safety. They offered their services for a search of Elijah. But Elisha had a better knowledge of the affair, and objected to their proposal.

Verse 17. Elisha knew he was correct in his judgment, and therefore had nothing to be ashamed of as the word is commonly used. The original is defined by Strong, "to pale, i. e. by implication to be ashamed; also (by implication) to be disappointed, or delayed." It has been translated in the A. V. by *delay*, *be long* and others. The thought is that the men insisted so long that Elisha concluded he would not delay longer, but would let them learn a lesson by their own disappointment. Upon his consent the eager group went in search for Elijah; three days of fruitless search followed.

Verse 18. Elisha was so sure the men would return that he tarried at Jericho for them. Upon their coming back, he chastised them mildly by reminding them of his advice.

Verse 19. *Situation* means the site of the city, that the "view" was agreeable. *Naught* is from *BAH* and defined, "bad or (as noun) evil (naturally or morally)"—Strong. *Barren* is from *SHAKOL* and Strong defines it, "A primitive root; properly to miscarry, i. e. suffer abortion." This condition was practically admitted by Elisha, so that we need not doubt the statement by the citizens. Something must have come up to cause the condition, for Jericho was a popular city and no such complaint had been made of it. Some kind of germ had crept into the source of drinking water, causing abortion with expectants who needed to use it. The citizens would know of Elisha's miraculous power, for he had just performed the feat of forcing a passage across the Jordan nearby. They told him of the defect in their city, with the hope that he would do something about it.

Verses 20-22. *Spring of waters* means the source of their drinking water, thus showing that it was the water that was infected and not the ground. This observation is important in meeting the critic who would say that salt

would kill the ground instead of causing it to yield fruit.

Verse 23. *Bald head.* The second word is not in the original. The first is from *QUERACH* and Strong defines it, "bald (on the back of the head)." It is the word for "bald" in Lev. 13: 40, where it is seen to contrast with "fore-head bald" in V. 41. *Children* is from *NAAR* and Strong defines it, "A boy from the age of infancy to adolescence." *Go* is from *ALAH* and defined, "A primitive root; to ascend, intransitively (be high) actively (mount)."—Strong. The wording of the common text is correct. In derision with reference to the ascension of Elijah, the master of Elisha, these boys made fun of the prophet. For some reason the back of his head was bald, which could be seen by the boys as they followed him. As an impertinent remark, which they probably thought was smart, they taunted Elisha with the suggestion that, as he was a baldheaded old man, he was ready to leave this world, and should follow the other old man who had just gone up from the earth.

Verse 24. *Cursed.* Unfortunately, this word has acquired an exaggerated meaning in the popular mind. It is thought of as being some profane and harsh language, expressed against someone with the idea of inflicting a specially dire penalty. It is from *QUALAL*, and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to be (causatively make) light, literally (swift, small, sharp, etc.) or figuratively (easy, trifling, vile, etc.)." The passage means that Elisha pronounced them as very insignificant and unworthy; also very rash and inconsiderate in what they said, and deserving of some punishment. As far as the text shows, however, Elisha left it for the Lord to decide on what it should be. He caused 42 of them to be destroyed by wild beasts. This was a severe punishment, but disrespect for their elders was also a serious offense, and children need to know how wrong it is; a severe punishment was the necessary penalty for that lesson.

Verse 25. After all these experiences, Elisha went on his way. Passing on to Mount Carmel, he went on to Samaria where he spent much of his time. It is in this place where we will see some of his most noted exploits. The city was the capital of the kingdom of Israel, and thus a fitting headquarters for this national prophet.



## 2 KINGS 3

Verse 1. It is important that the reader avoid confusion over the switching back and forth of the accounts concerning the kingdom of Judah and Israel. Read the comments at 1 Ki. 12: 17 frequently. Also remember that the Bible is not always chronological in its historical reports in other parts; much less would it be in this place, where two rival, but related kingdoms, are being reported simultaneously. Jehoram's reign was mentioned in Ch. 1: 17 and then dropped to give us accounts of the two great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, whose lives were so closely woven together for a time.

Verses 2, 3. The Bible gives credit where it is due. Jehoram was the son of Ahab and Jezebel, who were exceptionally wicked people. This son was not as bad as they, and had corrected a part of their evil work by removing the image of Baal. He was bad enough, however, and followed the example of Jeroboam, the first king of Israel.

Verses 4, 5. The revolt of Moab was barely mentioned at Ch. 1: 1 but is resumed here. The particular act that signified the break was the withholding of tribute. The king of Moab had been rendering or delivering to Israel 100,000 each of lambs and rams per year. That tribute was stopped which amounted to a declaration of war.

Verse 6. One word in the definition of the original for *numbered* is "muster." Jehoram was preparing for war with Moab, and went out to get his soldiers together.

Verse 7. It is highly probable that Jehoram knew of the alliance that was formed between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, father of Ahaziah and Jehoram, in the war with Syria. That encouraged him to ask for a similar alliance with him for the war with Moab. He was not disappointed, and the answer was the same as that given to Ahab. See 1 Ki. 22: 4.

Verse 8. After agreeing to the alliance, Jehoshaphat asked Jehoram his advice as to the proper route in the approach to Moab. The reply was that they go by the wilderness of Edom. That land was south of Moab, while these Israelite kings were north and west. That made it necessary for them to take a roundabout route. The object for the move is not stated, but from the facts of the next verse, Jehoram must have had reason to expect some favor from Edom.

Verse 9. Sure enough, the king of Edom joined as an ally of Jehoram and Jehoshaphat. *Compass of seven days* means the route they chose was out of the way to the extent that it took seven days longer. It also took them into a territory where there was no drinking water.

Verse 10. Jehoram became uneasy and feared that perhaps the situation was brought about by the Lord; if so, it was in order to entrap them with the Moabites.

Verse 11. After the law of Moses was completed and left with God's people, it was regarded as all the Lord wanted in the way of statute law, or formal enactment. That is why we have the words "and he added no more" in Deut. 5: 22. As time went on, it was necessary to have the services of inspired men in interpreting that law to show its proper application, also to give specific information in emergencies. For such purposes God used the priests (Lev. 10: 8-11; Deut. 17: 9, 10; Mal. 2: 7) and the prophets. See Heb. 1: 1. Jehoshaphat had good reason, therefore, to call for a *prophet of the Lord*. He was told of an available one by the name of Elisha. *Poured water on the hands of Elijah*. This fact is not mentioned in any other place, and is doubtless merely a reference to his ministrations to the head prophet over him. Moffatt's translation is, "who used to be servant to Elijah."

Verse 12. Jehoshaphat recognized Elisha as an inspired prophet, and the three kings went to confer with him.

Verse 13. *What have I to do with thee* is the same as saying, "What are you coming to me for?" *Prophets of thy father* means the prophets whom Ahab and Jezebel relied on when they wanted advice to their liking; they were the idolatrous ones. Jehoram still believed the Lord had brought about the alliance of these three kings for the purpose of some punishment. But it was Jehoshaphat who insisted on their advising with the prophet before venturing on their military enterprise.

Verse 14. Jehoshaphat was a good king, and his presence caused Elisha to respect the group of kings standing in his presence.

Verse 15. The *minstrel* was a musician. Just why Elisha wished the services of this person we do not know. It was in line, however, with the practice of the prophets and other

miracle workers in the Biblical times. It gives a concrete exhibition of the fact mentioned by Paul in Heb. 1: 1 that, not only did God speak to the fathers by the prophets, but he did so "at sundry times and in divers manners."

Verses 16, 17. *Ditches* is from a word that means pools. God proposed to bring a flow of water into the valley, and the pools would store up and save the precious liquid after the general spread had served its purpose, and had flowed away. This was to be a miraculous supply of water, and not brought by ordinary weather conditions.

Verses 18, 19. *Light thing* means that it is unimportant compared with the other miracle they will receive. Managing an army of men would be a mightier feat than bringing forth a supply of water. *Fenced city* means a walled or fortified city. *Choice city* means a city very desirable from standpoints other than being walled. To *mar* the fields with stones means to strew it with them so they cannot be cultivated.

Verse 20. *Meat offering*. The first word is not in the original as a separate word. The expression as a whole refers to the regular time of morning sacrifice which was nine o'clock. The miraculous supply came from the direction of the land of Edom, until the country had the appearance of a lake.

Verse 21. About this time the Moabites awoke to their danger, and gathered all their fighting men for battle.

Verses 22, 23. This body of water was between the allies and the Moabites. From the angle where the latter looked in the direction of the water, it was made to look like blood. This could be aptly called a miraculous camouflage, for the Lord certainly caused it to occur to deceive the Moabites. They concluded the enemies were slain and that their blood was causing the red which they saw. With the enemy slain, nothing was to hinder them from taking the spoil, so they thought, and thus announced it.

Verse 24. The camp of the allies, which was in charge of the Israelites, was kept quiet. The soldiers were lying low, looking for the Moabites to come on with no expectation of meeting any resistance. All of this was an effective maneuver, doubtless inspired by the Lord as his means of causing fulfillment of the promise in

verses 18, 19. The allies sprang to the attack and overcame the Moabites. They were put to flight and chased even to their own country with great slaughter.

Verse 25. *Only in Kir-hareseth*. The first word is not in the original. The R. V. words it, "until in Kir-hareseth," etc. The verse means they made exception of this city in their general destruction with the large stones. But it was not to escape entirely, for the men with the slings encompassed the city and smote the people.

Verse 26. This kind of maneuver is called a storm attack. It sometimes obtains an entrance through the enemy's lines when all other means fail. The attack was a failure in this case and the Moabites were forced to retire.

Verse 27. This human sacrifice was not with sincere devotion to the idolatrous god of the Moabites, for in that case it would have been done at some proper shrine of the gods. It was done upon the wall, in sight of the Israelites. That created such a sentimental protest among them that the leaders were forced to leave the scene.

## 2 KINGS 4

Verse 1. The sons of the prophets were sometimes married men, although only students of the older ones. The widow of one of them was the complainant before Elisha. It was a practice among certain ones to seize upon human chattels as security for debts. In consideration of her devotion to the Lord, she thought the prophet should help her.

Verse 2. *What shall I do for thee* was asked in the sense of merely introducing the subject. It might be considered as a meditative form of speech, leading up to the more specific inquiry into her own resources.

Verse 3. There is no limit to divine power, whether in connection with human effort or not. But it has always been a rule of God to require man to do what he could. This woman had a supply of oil and it will be used as a starter. See a similar situation in the widow and the meal, in 1 Ki. 17: 12. Note that the woman in the present paragraph was admonished to borrow not a few.

Verse 4. Elisha left direct connection with the case after giving instructions.

Verse 5. In obedience to the order from Elisha, the woman closed the

door and began filling the borrowed vessels, using the pot of oil that she had as a source.

Verse 6. The supply of oil was continuous as long as there was any provision to care for it. When that failed, the flow of oil stopped. This was what was signified when Elisha cautioned, "borrow not a few" in V. 3.

Verses 7. Olive oil, which was the only kind known in that day, was valuable in many ways. Now that the woman had a large store of it, she did not know what Elisha intended for her to do with it, until he authorized her to use it in meeting her debt, and as a source of future income.

Verse 8. *It fell on a day* is the same as if we would say, "one day Elisha came to Shunem." We are not told what business took him there this time or afterward. But a certain woman of some prominence saw him and offered him her hospitality. Having been treated thus kindly, he made it a regular thing to stop at this house.

Verses 9, 10. Houses were built with flat roofs. A chamber *on the wall* was an "addition" to the main building, and could be entered and left independent of the rest of the house. That would be very appropriate for Elisha, as he was coming and going frequently, and this arrangement would accommodate him without always joining in with the family life. So a little furniture was installed and the guest room turned over for the use of the *man of God*.

Verse 11. *It fell on a day* is an obsolete form of saying, "so one day," etc. Elisha had accepted the hospitality with appreciation.

Verse 12. The woman of the house was called by the servant, Gehazi, and stood in talking distance of him, so that he could act as a go-between for her and Elisha.

Verse 13. The message passed from Elisha to the woman was to bid her name a wish. It was suggested that a good word be spoken in her behalf to the king or general of the army. Perhaps they would provide a more suitable place of residence. But she declined the offer and preferred to remain with her relatives.

Verse 14. Elisha asked his servant to suggest something for the woman. He was told that she had no child. She evidently was much younger than her husband, for only he was mentioned as being old. Had she been old as

well as he, it certainly would have been as logical to refer to her age, as to his; if any difference, more so to her.

Verse 15. The woman was recalled and stood in the door of his room.

Verse 16. *Time of life* refers to the natural period of carrying the unborn child. The promise of a son seemed incredible to the woman. Nothing was said about her age or condition otherwise in view of becoming a mother. All we have that would bear on the subject is the remark of Gehazi, that her husband was old. That fact, and the remark of doubt by the woman, leaves the conclusion that the husband was thought of as being too old to beget a child. The word *lie* sounds so harsh to us that we shrink from it. To "deceive" is the same principle but not so severe on the ear; the original has been so rendered in other places. The woman was so surprised and taken aback that she instinctively used the term. The whole statement might be worded, "You are a man of God; surely, then, you would not deceive me about this."

Verse 17. The promise was fulfilled and the child was born *at the time of life*, meaning the proper time after conception.

Verse 18. *Grown* is from an original with indefinite meaning. It does not necessarily mean *fully* grown; but only that the child had grown enough to perform the action of walking out into the field to his father.

Verse 19. *Lad* is from NAAK and is sometimes translated "servant" in the A. V. Some convulsive attack came upon the boy that caused his complaint. Since it was a time of harvest (reapers), it is possible that it was a sunstroke.

Verse 20. The child was old enough to walk to the field, but young enough to be carried by the servant, and nursed in his mother's arms until he died.

Verse 21. How natural it was for the mother to take the body of her child into the room of Elisha. He was the one who had promised the son to her, and through whose intercession the Lord had granted it. Besides, she must leave the body for a time, and she would desire it to have as much privacy as possible. Therefore she *went up* (the room was on the wall) and laid him on the bed of *the man of God*.

Verse 22. This verse would indicate that the regular dwelling places of Elisha and the woman were not far apart. Mount Carmel was a range 12 miles long. Shunem was in the same general territory of this range, hence the statement above. Furthermore, the distance could not have been too great, for it is evident that some of the actors in this drama traveled on foot.

Verse 23. It appears that the husband was not aware of the child's death. The usual occasion for calling on the prophet was for observance of some feast, such as that on the new moon or on a sabbath day. *It shall be well.* The last word only is in the original, but the thought of the group is authorized. The word is from *shalom* and Strong defines it, "safe, i. e. (figuratively) well, happy, friendly; also (abstractly) welfare, i. e. health, prosperity, peace." The expression indicates the woman's faith that it would finally be well with the child.

Verse 24. Some factors in this arrangement are not clear. Nothing is said about a second beast, yet the servant is urged not to slacken his riding. Neither is anything said about a vehicle for their common use; and that would have made the saddling of the beast unnecessary. The best solution in my mind is, they each rode a beast, and the servant was expected to stimulate the speed of hers by urging the one he was riding.

Verse 25, 26. The appearance of this woman under the circumstances made Elisha suspect that something was wrong. He bade his servant go to meet her, and to ask the questions about the welfare of the family. *It is well* is explained at V. 23.

Verse 27. Taking hold of Elisha's feet seemed to be an intrusion in the eyes of Gehazi. The prophet thought otherwise; that some great sorrow was upon her heart, and that Gehazi should not molest her.

Verses 28, 29. The entire conversation is not recorded. In the previous verse Elisha said the woman's grief had not been told him by the Lord, but in this paragraph he gives directions on account of the death, which shows that the woman told him about it. Laying the staff on the child was another instance of using a material, though not logical means, in connection with the miraculous results. See Ch. 2: 8.

Verse 30. "As sure as the Lord lives,

just that sure will I not leave thee" is the meaning of the woman's statement. Upon this, Elisha went with her to her home.

Verse 31. Had there been any virtue in the staff, the child would have reacted when Gehazi laid it on him. Again, read the comments at Ch. 2: 8.

Verses 32, 33. We should understand that the *twain* were Elisha and the dead child. Why he wished no one else in the room we know not. Peter did a similar thing in the case of Dorcas. (Acts 9: 10.) It is one of those things that belong to the Lord and not to be revealed to us. See Deut. 29: 29.

Verse 34. When Paul restored the life of the young man at Troas (Acts 20: 10), he did so by embracing him, after which his life was in him. In the case of Elisha and the child, he made contact between their bodies, after which *the flesh of the child waxed warm*. The life was then returned to the body, although there was no activity as yet. The mere fact of contact by a living body with a dead one would not restore life, else it could still be done. But it was the Lord's way of doing the work this time. And once more, the reader is asked to see comments at Ch. 2: 8.

Verse 35. *Returned, and walked, etc.* This does not mean that he had left the house. The first word is defined in part by Strong, "to retreat." It means that Elisha retreated from the child so as to make his to-and-fro movement in the house. Moffatt's translation says, "rising up, he walked to and fro." After this, he contacted the child again, but not to restore his life. When warmth comes into a body that has been cold and dead, it is evidence of life. Just why it was desired to carry out the peculiar actions of this verse we are not told. We know it was not to restore life.

Verse 36. *Take up thy son* indicates that the child was not large, also that he might still be somewhat weak from the ordeal he had gone through. Elisha could have overcome even that, had it been the divine will. The Lord has always dealt on the principle of leaving it to man to do what he could. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, but commanded the people to feed her (Mark 5: 43), and he raised Lazarus to life, but told the sisters to remove the graveclothes. (John 11: 44.)



Verse 37. Gratitude prompted the mother to do this act of homage. *Bowed herself to the ground.* This room was on the wall and therefore had no literal ground in it. The key is in the word *to*, which has the meaning of *toward* the ground. The main thought is, the woman was so thankful and humble that she took a prostrate attitude of body before the prophet, bowing downward or toward the ground. A person could be said to do that if he were in the top story of a skyscraper.

Verse 38. In times of distress or emergency, the student prophets looked to their master prophet for relief. At this time the shortage of food was caused by the dearth, and the group of prophets expected something from Elisha. The large boiling vessel was ordered put on the fire to *seethe pottage*, which means to boil soup.

Verse 39. While one servant was making ready the pot for the soup, another was out foraging for something to use in the pottage. As there was a dearth, there would not be a great supply of vegetables. Strong defines these wild gourds as wild cucumbers. They resembled other vine products and hence the servants made the mistake of getting a poisonous plant.

Verse 40. By the time the soup was ready to eat its true character was discovered, and they appealed to Elisha to help them out of their predicament.

Verse 41. The *meal* was ground grain and an ordinary article of food. It had no power of removing poison from another food without miracle. The student should frequently refer to the comments at Ch. 2: 8.

Verse 42. *Full ears of corn.* The first word is not in the original. The others are from one word and defined in part by Strong, "garden produce." *Husks* is from *tsiqron* and defined by Strong, "a sack (as tied at the mouth)." This part of the verse should be worded, "twenty loaves of barley, and garden produce, in a sack." The man who brought these provisions was told to feed the people with them.

Verses 43, 44. The word *servitor* means "contributor" and refers to the man who brought the bread and produce. He was puzzled at the thought of feeding so many people with such a small supply of food. His remark was similar in thought to that made

by the disciples to Christ. (Matt. 15: 33.) In using this comparatively small amount of food for the multitude, Elisha followed a principle already mentioned a number of times. God will not do for man what he can do for himself. The widow's meal and oil contributed to the miraculous favor of God. The people before Elisha ate of the food set before them. They were abundantly satisfied, for they left some over.

## 2 KINGS 5

Verse 1. Naaman was commander in chief of the Syrian army. He was *honorable* which means he ranked high in the esteem of his king. The reason given for this high standing, is the fact that the Lord had given victory to his arms. This favor from God agrees with the declaration made to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4: 17.) It also should be considered in connection with Rom. 13: 1-6. Since the existence of human governments is of divine origin, we should not wonder at God's interest and participation therein. He even has used them in chastising his own people. Naaman was afflicted with leprosy, an incurable disease by any natural remedy.

Verse 2. Syria was just north of Israel, and was frequently engaged in battle with that kingdom. In one of the raids into the territory of the Israelites, the Syrians had captured a little maid who became the attendant of Naaman's wife.

Verses 3, 4. The little maid remembered Elisha and his ability to cure disease. Her interest in the welfare of her master was sweet and unselfish. She had been taken out of her native land, and under the command of this very master. In spite of that, she was desirous of having him cured of the terrible disease. She spoke to her mistress about the matter, and another person revealed the message to the king, who was naturally eager that so valuable a soldier be healed.

Verse 5. *Go to, go.* This was an obsolete way of saying, "come, and I will send," etc. It was a mistake, doubtless due to some misunderstanding, that the king of Syria wrote to the king of Israel, instead of to the prophet Elisha. The articles mentioned to be taken along should not be considered as a bribe. It was customary to recognize kings and other dignitaries by making them presents. See 1 Ki. 4: 21; 2 Ki. 17: 3; 2 Chr. 17: 5; Psa. 68: 29.

Verse 6. If the king of Israel had been respectfully addressed, and then requested that the services of Elisha be tendered him, there might not have been any friction. The error was in asking the king to *recover him of his leprosy*.

Verse 7. Jehoram was the king of Israel at that time. He had never professed to have miraculous power, and this direct request, made by the king of a foreign nation, was equivalent to a declaration of war, or at least, a threat of one. Friendly nations are supposed to be willing to grant favors to each other, and the refusal is considered as an unfriendly act. By asking a favor on this established basis, and yet one that he knew would be impossible of fulfillment, it seemed that the king of Syria was laying plans for a pretext on which to make a complaint.

Verse 8. Word of the affair came to the ears of Elisha. The humbleness of the man of God, as well as his respect for the Lord, was indicated by the message he sent to the king. He brought out the significant motive he had for seeking the chance to cure Naaman; that he might know there was a (inspired) prophet in Israel.

Verse 9. The word was passed on to the unfortunate Naaman, and he arrived at the door of Elisha's house, eager to have him administer to his stricken condition.

Verse 10. The original word for *wash* applies to part or the whole of a body. The command was understood by Naaman, however, to mean to dip or plunge, for that is what he finally did, receiving the desired result. At the same time, much unnecessary speculation has been done on this case. Whether Naaman was afflicted in whole or in part of his body with the leprosy we do not know. The conclusion remains that what was done was a plunging into the water, not a mere application of water to the affected parts.

Verses 11, 12. Naaman belonged to a race of idolaters, and such people were more or less superstitious. They believed in the ceremonies of conjuration as a means of obtaining some superhuman result. Naaman was describing such a ceremony in this place. He reasoned on the theory that Elisha expected the leprosy to be healed through the virtue of the water. Had he been acquainted with the ideas

offered to our readers at 2 Ki. 2: 8, he might have made a different speech. The rivers of Damascus were fed by clear and clean water, while the Jordan was a swift, muddy stream. The reasoning from a material standpoint, therefore, was sound. Naaman's disappointment caused him to turn away in a rage, and he was about to return home.

Verse 13. *Servant* and *father* are used as opposite terms in the present connection; the conclusion is that Naaman was regarded as their master. The line of thought the servants were following was that some *great thing* would have been done on the theory that it would have accomplished the desired end naturally, or as a logical consequence. The simpler instructions, however, should have commended themselves as coming from a person of authority. An uninspired man would need to use some great method, if the outcome sought were to be obtained. Therefore, this simpler and illogical plan should indicate to the interested party that it was no ordinary person who was directing him.

Verse 14. The inspired writer tells us that when Naaman *dipped* himself, it was according to the saying of the man of God. See comments on *wash* in V. 10. When "seven" is used figuratively it denotes completeness. One dipping would have ended in the cure of the leprosy, had the prophet seen fit to command only one. The desired result was obtained from the Lord, because Naaman went to the end of the commandment.

Verse 15. Gratitude is one of the greatest of virtues, and very unworthy is he who does not manifest it in return for favors. The benefit was already bestowed upon Naaman; his offer of the *blessing*, therefore, was from a pure and unselfish motive. The *blessing* is elsewhere translated "present" in the A. V. Naaman was a lord over others, but called himself a *servant* to Elisha, which was in humble respect for his benefactor.

Verse 16. There could not be anything morally wrong in offering or accepting the present. We are not told why Elisha refused it. He was so positive about it that he emphasized his determination by making it as sure as that the Lord lived.

Verse 17. We know there was earth available in the land of Syria. The use Naaman proposed to make of this was

to build an altar on which to offer sacrifices. He had the erroneous idea that earth from the country where he had been converted to the God of Israel was more suitable for the purpose. Elisha made no objection to his taking the earth, nor to his proposal to offer sacrifices to God. The Patriarchal Dispensation was in force, and any man not an Israelite was eligible for proselyting to that form of religion, even if he were not in direct line. See Ex. 18: 12; Job 1: 5.

Verse 18. Naaman was a servant of the king, and he was an idolater. When they entered the house of Rimmon, an idolatrous temple, Naaman would still need to accompany his master to give him bodily support. By that sort of service he would have to move his body up or down in conjunction with his master's body. In this verse he is reserving the right to do that, and it was not to be regarded as a breaking of the promise just made to Elisha to worship God only.

Verse 19. The reservation was approved as indicated by the words, *go in peace*. A *little way* means he got only a short distance homeward until something happened, of which we will read in the next paragraph.

Verse 20. Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, had overheard the conversation between his master and Naaman. Being of covetous mind, he thought he saw an opportunity to get some valuables for his own possession, and Elisha would not know about it. As the *Lord liveth* means, "as sure as the Lord lives."

Verse 21. Naaman had not gone far, which is signified by the words *a little way* in V. 19. He saw Gehazi coming and stopped his travel to greet the approaching servant of his benefactor. *Is all well* was a courteous expression of good will.

Verse 22. The story that Gehazi told seemed reasonable. There was nothing morally wrong in the proposition to give something to Elisha; he merely was not disposed to accept it for his personal use. But this emergency of the arrival of the student prophets would change the situation; there would be nothing wrong in helping them.

Verse 23. Naaman would be glad for the opportunity to show his appreciation. In asking for only one talent of silver, Gehazi appeared very modest in the estimation of Naaman. That is

why he urged him to take more. The amount of the gift called for some help in carrying it back to Elisha, and two servants were sent for that purpose.

Verse 24. Gehazi did not intend for Elisha to know anything about the ill gotten articles. As soon as they reached the tower, which would afford a hiding place for the goods, he took charge of them and dismissed the servants, who returned to resume the homeward journey with their master.

Verse 25. We may wonder that Gehazi ever imagined he could deceive Elisha. He had been his servant and in close touch with him. He knew of his inspiration and other superhuman ability; but covetousness is a strong sentiment. It is so dominating that Paul calls it idolatry; not merely as bad as idolatry. (Col. 3: 5.) With such an evil desire in his heart, it should be no surprise that he would lie to the prophet.

Verse 26. One definition of *heart* is "the mind." Through inspiration, Elisha's mind was present at the transaction between Naaman and Gehazi. *Is it a time*, etc. The mere fact of receiving some material gift would not be wrong. But when a serious circumstance had called for a test of the authority of God's prophet, it was not an appropriate time to be interested in money and clothing. That would be especially true when obtained by fraud, and by playing on the generosity of another.

Verse 27. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, the leprosy of the Old Testament was the white variety. It was not fatal at once, and in some cases the leper might live to old age and die of some other disease. But it was a loathsome malady, and subjected the victim to great shame. *Leprosy of Naaman* does not mean that Gehazi "caught" the disease from Naaman. The expression is figurative, and means that as he was so eager for Naaman's valuables, he would receive his disease also.

## 2 KINGS 6

Verse 1. *Too strait* means too narrow or cramped for their needs.

Verse 2. A *beam* was the body of a tree, and the plan was for each man to cut down a tree, then use the log in building a dwelling.

Verse 3. Elisha had approved of the proposal of the prophets, and upon

their request agreed to go with them to Jordan to get the timber.

Verses 4, 5. These men were cutting down the trees growing on the bank of the Jordan. The ax slipped off the handle and disappeared in the water. It showed a good principle to be concerned over the loss of the article because it was *borrowed*. It indicated unselfishness and a regard for the interests of another.

Verses 6, 7. This is another place to consider the comments at Ch. 2: 8.

Verse 8. Syria was the country lying immediately north of Israel, and Damascus was the capital. There was war frequently between the two kingdoms. *In such and such a place* meant that the location of the camp was named to the servants of the king of Syria, so that they would be informed about it. At the same time the expression denotes the fact that Elisha could locate the camp through his inspiration, in spite of the indefinite language used by the Syrian king.

Verse 9. With the knowledge mentioned in the preceding paragraph, Elisha gave the warning to the king of Israel, definitely pointing out *such a place* to him, though the king of Syria intended *such a place* to be so indefinite an expression that no stranger could find it.

Verse 10. The king of Israel acted on the warning of Elisha. When he would be thinking of making a journey near the danger zone, he would first send out a reconnaissance force to learn of the conditions. By doing this he saved himself *not once nor twice*, which means he saved himself one or two times.

Verse 11. The king of Syria kept looking for the king of Israel, and wondered why he never came into sight. He finally concluded there was a traitor in his camp who was keeping the Israelites informed. In his distress he called upon his people to inform him of the guilty person.

Verse 12. Some servant of the Syrian king thought about Elisha and his superhuman knowledge. He was correct in his idea that no secret could be hid from Elisha.

Verse 13. If the knowledge of an inspired man cannot be outdone, it should be realized that he cannot be defeated by mere human strategy. But the king of Syria was so desperate that he overlooked all such reflections, and made plans to capture the man of

God laying siege to the town where he was at the time.

Verse 15. In the morning the besieging forces were seen around the town. The servant of Elisha was frightened at the sight and made a distress call to him.

Verse 16. The forces with Elisha were not visible to the natural eye, but the prophet was aware of their presence and help.

Verse 17. For the benefit of the young man, Elisha prayed God to give him a vision of the forces on their side. God answered the prayer and he saw the mountain covered with the hosts of Heaven, in the form of flaming chariots and their horses.

Verse 18. *They* in this place means the Syrians besieging the city. Elisha prayed again and in answer God smote the enemy with blindness.

Verse 19. Elisha misled the people, but such action was according to military practice, and this was a military action according to the words *captive* and *sword* in V. 22. While Elisha misled his enemy, he did not mistreat him. Instead, he chastised the king of Israel for wanting to do so, and commanded him to treat them with kindness.

Verses 20-23. Much of this paragraph was commented on above. Had the king of Israel been allowed to carry out his suggestion against these captives, he would have become a "war criminal." The treatment accorded them had the desired effect, by putting a stop to the inroads of the Syrians for the present.

Verse 24. The war spirit is a restless one. Some time after the events of the preceding paragraphs, the Syrians again came into the land of Israel. They laid siege to Samaria, the capital of that kingdom.

Verse 25. In all ages and in every country, a prolonged siege of a walled city results in a famine; and a famine results in the inflation of costs of necessities of life. Ordinarily, no one would care to eat the head of an ass. In this siege it was not only accepted as food, but was sold for the enormous sum of 80 pieces of silver, which Moffatt says is ten pounds. A cab was about a pint, and one fourth of a cab of dove's dung was sold for five pieces of silver, or about three dollars. The dung was used for fuel in that country, and as all kinds of fuel would be difficult to find in a siege, this article



was obtainable from the fact of the birds' being winged creatures, and not affected by a siege.

Verse 26. The king of Israel was on the wall of the city, looking out to view the position of the enemy. This brought him into sight of one of his distressed subjects, who cried to him for help.

Verse 27. Threshing was done by piling the whole straw on a barnfloor, then beating out the grain by driving oxen round and round over it. When that was done, the loose chaff and grain was tossed up into the air with a winnowing shovel (called a fan in Matt. 3: 12), where the wind would blow the chaff away, letting the grain drop back on the floor. In times of famine there would be no grain to thresh. The winepress also would be empty as there would be no grapes to press. The first of this verse means that if a miracle is not performed to help them, it would be in vain to look to a man for relief from natural sources.

Verses 28, 29. There was some indication that a special situation prompted the woman to call on the king to intervene. Upon his inquiry she related her terrible story. Hunger had driven two mothers to the extreme plan of devouring their own flesh and blood. This very thing was predicted in Deut. 28: 53. After eating the flesh of one child the pangs of hunger were relieved and the mother was restored to a saner mind, and it was natural for her to back down from the agreement that hunger had impelled her to make. The other mother was thus expecting the king to take a hand in the case.

Verse 30. The king did nothing about the affair of these women, but the case made a profound impression on him. He rent his clothes and covered his nakedness with a coarse material, commonly used for making sacks. In this condition he walked by the people as he was still on the wall of the city.

Verse 31. *God do so* is a Biblical expression found frequently. It means that if the speaker does not carry out the thing he is threatening against some one, then may God do that thing to him, the speaker. In the case at hand, the king threatened to have Elisha beheaded. The prophet had performed miracles when it was God's will. The king of Israel was so rash as to think a miracle could be per-

formed at will at the request of a wicked ruler. In his distress he threatened vengeance against Elisha.

Verse 32. Elisha was a national prophet of God, and was informed by inspiration of the king's plot. He prepared himself against attack by having the elders, men of outstanding rank, to bar the door against the entrance of the execution party.

Verse 33. While Elisha was talking with the elders, the messenger of the king of Israel came, the king immediately following. When they got to the door of Elisha's house they found it locked against them. By this time the king concluded that the whole difficulty of the siege and famine was from the Lord, and that it would be vain to oppose it farther. *What should I wait*, etc., means he was despairing of receiving any help from the Lord. However, Elisha assured him that the situation would soon be eased. This assurance is shown in the next chapter.

## 2 KINGS 7

Verse 1. In the preceding chapter, the king of Israel realized the Lord had brought about the condition of distress then upon the capital city, or at least that he had suffered it to be so. He concluded also that it would be of no avail to ask God for help. In the present paragraph he will be promised a change. The prices named for necessities of life are so small that only by great plenty could such a thing be.

Verse 2. The king made no comment on Elisha's prediction, that is recorded, but the personal attendant doubted it. He is called a lord, and Strong defines it as a general of the third rank. In response to the expression of doubt, Elisha made another prediction: that the great plenty would come and the lord would see it; but he would not get to eat of it. The fulfillment of this strange prediction will come soon.

Verses 3, 4. The apparently abrupt change of subjects is necessary to lead up to the great plenty just predicted by Elisha. Lev. 13: 46 shows the isolated kind of life imposed by the law on lepers. They were not prohibited entirely from going abroad, but they must observe certain restrictions for the protection of others. Within these regulations they could leave their individual dwellings and go abroad and about the country. In a state of help-

lessness, these lepers had sat down on the outside of the city near the gateway. Under the general situation confronting them, they concluded that nothing could come to them any worse than by remaining there until death. If they entered the city, they would perish from the famine. The proposal of falling in with the Syrians had the advantage of its being no risk of anything worse than would come to them by any other procedure.

Verse 5. Having decided to take their chance with the Syrians, the lepers rose up in the evening and started toward their camp. When they reached the outskirts of the camp they found it deserted.

Verse 6. The idea that the Lord would mislead the Syrians is to be understood in the light of military procedure. For more comments on this point see 1 Ki. 22: 20. The Syrians did not feel able to cope with all these other forces which they were sure had been hired against them.

Verse 7. The flight of the panic-stricken people was timed to coincide with the approach of the lepers. Consequently, when they came to it they found everything belonging to a well-equipped camp intact.

Verse 8. They went from tent to tent, eating and drinking. They also carried much of the valuable property and assets to some place of hiding.

Verse 9. The lepers suddenly realized they were being selfish in not reporting their "find" to others so that they could share in the good things. Moreover, should they continue in their selfishness till morning, they might justly come to some punishment. It was then decided to let the king's family know about the conditions.

Verses 10, 11. A leper would not venture any farther than to a porter, which was the janitor or gate keeper. They gave the news to this person, describing the conditions as they found them. The one who was on duty at the time passed the word to other porters and they told it to the king's family.

Verse 12. The king did not doubt the scheme of the Syrians. He took it to be a trick to get the Israelites drawn out of their entrenchments. The hunger that famine would naturally bring, might impel them to rush into the trap set for them. All this was the

scheme of the Syrians as the king of Israel feared.

Verse 13. A servant had a plan for testing the purpose of the Syrians. *They are as all the multitude.* This means that this small number could learn the true state of affairs just as well as the whole number in the city could if they went. If these five horsemen were sent out on this "suicide" sort of mission and were slain, they would not be any worse off than the ones who remained in the city. On the other hand, if they survived, their discovery would result in the preservation of the other citizens.

Verse 14. The suggestion pleased the king and he adopted the plan in principle. He selected just two, however, for they would answer the purpose as well as five. He commanded them to go and discover the real situation.

Verse 15. The camp of the Syrians was near the city of Samaria, since they had been conducting a siege of that place. But they had fled their camp, and the two horsemen would need to track them some distance to get the information desired by the king. They kept up the pursuit as far as Jordan. That was not the direction they naturally would have taken, for the country of the Syrians was north of Samaria. But they were panic-stricken and doubtless had taken the direction that first appeared to them. And the two men in pursuit were guided in their chase by the articles that the enemy had strewn along the way in their hasty flight.

Verse 16. To *spoil the tents* means to take the goods found in the tents, especially the articles of food. The great plenty of the provisions caused the low price at which they could be bought. In selling them at these low prices, one prediction of Elisha was fulfilled. The one pertaining to the doubting lord will be described next.

Verses 17-20. After a period of distress from hunger, people are apt to be disorderly and need to be put under restraint. The sudden discovery of so much food threatened a state of disorder and a rush to obtain the much wanted articles. Samaria was a walled city, and the passing in and out would have to be through the gate. For the purpose of order, the king made an appointment for the very lord who had been his personal attendant, that he should have charge of the gate. The people were mad with hunger and paid no attention to the gate keeper. In

their stampede to get access to the food, they bore down upon the lord and trampled him to death. By this tragedy the prediction made by Elisha (V. 2) was fulfilled. The lord saw the great plenty of food but did not get to eat of it.

## 2 KINGS 8

Verse 1. The famine of the preceding chapter was local, confined to a city and caused by a military siege. The one predicted now will be a miraculous one and will affect the land in general. A natural famine would not likely continue for a definite number of years as this one is to continue. In two respects it will be like the famine in Egypt in the time of Joseph. It is to last just seven years, and the Lord was to call for it. (Psa. 105: 16). In kind appreciation for past favors from the woman, Elisha warned her of the coming distress so she could arrange some place to live.

Verse 2. Acting upon the advice of Elisha, the woman went into the land of the Philistines where she remained for the duration of the famine. This land seems to have been more fortunate in times of famine. Isaac went there (Gen. 26: 1) at such a time and prospered. Now this woman went there to escape the famine in her country.

Verse 3. In the absence of the owner during the famine, the woman's property had been unlawfully seized by some person. She was unable to dislodge the intruder and had to appeal to the king for relief.

Verse 4. Before the woman came to the king, however, he had entered into conversation with Gehazi, personal servant of Elisha. It would be expected that he would make mention of his master, the prophet, and of his greatness in general. But general reference to the accomplishments of the man of God did not satisfy the king.

Verse 5. Among the *great things* Gehazi told the king was the feat of restoring to life the son of a certain woman. Just as he was telling the king about it, that very woman came into their presence to make the petition mentioned in V. 3. That served as an excellent introduction, and Gehazi confirmed her plea by connecting her with the miracle then being reported.

Verse 6. The word *famine* is from RAAB and Strong's definition is, "hunger (more or less extensive)." From this definition we would conclude that

even in a time of famine, there would be some products of the land available. In Gen. 43: 11 we read that in spite of the general famine, Jacob was able to send nuts and other products as a "present" into Egypt. Some things could be staples that had been stored for many years, but nuts and other such things would not likely be suitable for food after too many seasons. The conclusion is, therefore, that a state of general dearth would not entirely stop the production of such articles as would be brought forth from the deeper moisture of the earth. This all agrees with the "more or less extensive" part of the definition. There would not be sufficient for sustenance of the whole citizenry, but a scant subsistence might be maintained by a person here and there, through the use of these commodities. They could be exchanged at some market within reach for the more necessary items of food. Such use had been made of this woman's land in her absence. The king ordered her property to be given up by the usurper, and also to have her reimbursed for these things that had been produced while she was out of the country.

Verse 7. Damascus was the principal city of Syria, and was located just north of Israel. Elisha went to that place where an occasion came up for making a prediction. Ben-hadad was the king of Syria, and he was sick. He heard of the arrival of Elisha.

Verse 8. The Syrian king had knowledge of the talents of Elisha, and decided to appeal to him for information. Hazael was an attendant upon Ben-hadad and did service at the royal court. He was told to take the customary "present" and call upon Elisha. *Shall I recover of this disease?* All that Ben-hadad had in mind when he sent for answer to this question was whether his illness was necessarily fatal. He knew nothing of the other conditions that might arise.

Verse 9. The extent of the *present* which Hazael took to Elisha would tell the reader that such was not to meet any material need for just one man. See the comments at Gen. 32: 13 for further explanation. *Thy son* was a figurative term that denoted a feeling of respect. Hazael delivered the very question of his king to Elisha.

Verse 10. We do not believe that an inspired man would contradict himself. When a statement is made that seems to disagree with another, an explana-

tion will be apparent if an attempt is made with fairness. As far as the illness was concerned, Ben-hadad need not die, and the message that Elisha intended for the Syrian king went that far only. The prediction of the last half of the verse was made to Hazael, and of course he did not tell that to his master.

Verse 11. *Ashamed* is from an original that means also "to be long." It here means that Elisha had set an expression on his face that continued for a long time, and he finally burst into tears. Inspired men can write or speak only what they see revealed, and such revelations often come to them as the occasion arises. When Elisha had delivered the prediction that Ben-hadad was to die, the Lord opened up another vision regarding the future of Syria. That had so much sorrow in it that it brought forth the weeping just mentioned.

Verse 12. Up to this point in the conversation, there is no indication that Hazael knew the significance of Elisha's prediction of the death of Ben-hadad. When he asked the prophet why he was weeping, the answer connected it with his own mistreatment of the people of Syria. Among the acts of violence he was going to commit, were the dashing of the children against the ground or other hard surfaces, and the murderous mutilation of expectant mothers.

Verse 13. The Old Testament has one word only for "dog." The literal meaning is the same as we understand by it today. The next definition is "a male prostitute." It next has a figurative meaning, being used to express the idea of unworthiness, and a general state of weakness. Hazael used the word in its figurative sense. "How could I, a private man, and one as insignificant as a dog, accomplish all these things thou hast predicted of me?" Hence the word as used in the present connection does not mean a dog in its moral sense, for that would be the very kind of character that would commit the horrible deeds described. The remark of Hazael brought forth the additional prediction that he was to become king of Syria. With such power, and with the disposition to misuse that power which so many kings show, he would be in a position to do the things predicted by Elisha.

Verse 14. The report that Hazael gave his master was a faithful one. He was not instructed to say anything

on the subject of his death; that prediction was made to Hazael only. The words *shouldst surely* are not in the Hebrew text. The word *recover* is from a word that has been translated "live" 148 times. The answer, therefore, that Elisha sent back to Ben-hadad was that he would live, but nothing was said as to how long. The Lord had his own reason for withholding part of the truth from him.

Verse 15. We do not know how far Elisha's predictions influenced Hazael in his actions. In 1 Ki. 11: 27 we are told that Jeroboam's rebellion was caused by the prediction recorded in V. 31 of that chapter. Elisha told Hazael that his king would die, and that he would reign in his stead. If the Lord predicts some evil act of mankind, that prediction will be fulfilled. But that fact will not justify the evil motive of the one doing the evil. See Luke 17: 1; 1 Cor. 11: 19. Hazael committed the brutal murder of his helpless master by suffocating him with a damp cloth. By that act he brought about the fulfillment of a prediction, but we have no intimation that God was pleased with it. His motive for the deed was a selfish one.

Verse 16. Joram and Jehoram were forms of the same name. Ahab, king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, each had a son with that name. The wording of this verse is somewhat unusual. The writer seems eager to give us plenty of details. The meaning is that the Jehoram who was the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign in the fifth year of the Jehoram who was the son of Ahab. The extra detail is put in, that Jehoshaphat was still reigning in Judah, down to the fifth year of Jehoram, king in Israel. The reader should again consult the comments at 1 Ki. 12: 17.

Verse 17. The item of where the kings reigned is given because there were two kingdoms of the children of Israel. Jerusalem was the capital of one, Samaria the other.

Verse 18. There was no law against marrying into another tribe. The fact of Jehoram's taking the daughter of Ahab to wife is stated, therefore, to help account for his evil reign. It is a strong argument against marriage with a family of doubtful principles, because of the evil influences. See 1 Cor. 15: 33.

Verse 19. In spite of the evil conduct of Jehoram, God suffered the kingdom of Judah to continue for the



time, in respect for David. *A light* means a representative to sit on the throne in the royal line.

Verse 20. This verse shows the fulfillment of the prediction made by Jacob to Esau, (Gen. 27: 40). The Edomites were descendants of Esau.

Verse 21. Joram, king of Judah, attempted to force the Edomites back into subjection. He took some forces and attacked the people at Zair, an Edomite city, and defeated the people of that place, driving them into their tents.

Verse 22. The victory over the forces at Zair was local only, and the Edomites continued to be independent. Their success encouraged the people of Libnah, a Canaanitish community, also to declare their independence.

Verse 23. For *Chronicles* see 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verse 24. *Slept with his fathers* is explained at 1 Ki. 2: 10. *City of David* was the principal borough of Jerusalem, and the place of headquarters for the kings.

Verses 25, 26. The preceding verse had said merely that Ahaziah took the throne after the death of his father. This one gives us the date, based on the reign of the king then on the throne of Israel. He reigned one year only, and it was a turbulent time for him. The mother's name is given according to the thoughts at 1 Ki. 14: 21.

Verse 27. *Son-in-law of the house of Ahab* means he married into that line. The fact is mentioned as an explanation, in part at least, of his wicked reign.

Verse 28. Ramoth-gilead was an important city east of the Jordan, and had been in the control of the Syrians for several years. The kings of Israel and Judah joined in an expedition to wrest the city from Hazael, the king then on the throne of Syria. The action was successful although Joram was wounded.

Verse 29. Jezreel was a city that became noted in the days of Ahab. To this place Joram went for treatment of the wounds inflicted on him by the Syrians. Ramah was another name for Ramoth-gilead. The close of the verse is merely an incidental mention of the sick call of one king upon another.

## 2 KINGS 9

Verse 1. *Children of the prophets* is the same as sons of the prophets, referring to the students associated with

the older, national prophets. *Gird up thy loins* meant to put a belt around the waist. That would equip the man for the journey, which would be from Damascus (Ch. 8: 7) to Ramoth-gilead. Olive oil was used in those days as one of the formalities connected with the appointment of kings.

Verses 2, 3. The Lord was going to change the dynasty, or family line of kings over Israel. In such a radical move it would not be any surprise that some formality would be used, such as this prophet was directed to do. And this act of the Lord agrees with what the Babylonian king was told regarding the placing of men on the thrones of the kingdoms of men. (Dan. 4: 17). The Jehoshaphat named was the son of Nimshi, who was not a member of the royal line. The application of oil to Jehu was preliminary to his actively taking the kingdom, and hence it was to be a private affair.

Verses 4, 5. When the young prophet reached Ramoth-gilead he found the military leaders in a war council. His announcement was that he had a message for a captain. All of the group were captains of the same rank, therefore he was asked to say which he meant, and he designated Jehu.

Verses 6, 7. The first verse records the fact of the selection of Jehu to be the next king. The other verse states why God was going to change the dynasty from the house of Ahab to another. Through the influence of his wicked wife Jezebel, Ahab had suffered the servants of the Lord to be slain.

Verse 8. The change of dynasty or family line was to be brought about by the avenging from God, causing the death of all the male heirs to the throne. See the comments at 1 Sam. 25: 22 for explanation of this obsolete word for the discharges of the male body. Also, for the reason why the males were specially marked for death.

Verse 9. The comparison was for the purpose of showing the complete overthrow of the family line.

Verse 10. This prediction about Jezebel had been made before. (1 Ki. 21: 23). Death may come to a person under circumstances of honor to the victim. But in the case of Ahab and his wicked wife, great dishonor was to be thrust upon their memory. He was to have no male descendant left, and she was to be denied respectful burial.

Verse 11. Curiosity is a strong sentiment. The other captains appeared to be concerned about their comrade. At least they made as if they were thoughtful for his welfare and pressed him for some information. Jehu tried to put them off with some indirect remark about what might be expected from such a man; one who gave the odd kind of speech that he did upon his arrival.

Verse 12. That did not satisfy them, for they felt sure that Jehu was keeping something back, either through fear or modesty. When they urged him to tell them what had been said, he told them the mission of the man sent from Elisha.

Verse 13. The other captains gave Jehu an ovation and gladly hailed him as king.

Verses 14, 15. *Jehu . . . conspired against Joram*, but it was with the consent of the Lord. At the battle of Ramoth-gilead, the Syrians lost the city to Joram. But he was wounded in the attack and had to go to Jezreel to be treated. While he was there the affair of Jehu's anointing took place, and Joram did not know anything about it. The comrades of Jehu had expressed themselves favorably for him. On the strength of that, he requested that no one go to Jezreel to inform Joram of the conspiracy. He wished to have first opportunity of contacting Joram, soon to be deposed, and that by the decree of God.

Verse 16. Jehu went to Jezreel and approached the city, at the time that Ahaziah, king of Judah, was visiting with Joram during his recovery.

Verse 17. Important men like Jehu did not travel alone. The watchman on the tower could see that a company of men was approaching. He told Joram about it and a man was directed to meet the company to learn the object of the mission.

Verse 18. *What hast thou to do with peace?* That was Jehu's way of telling the horseman that the mission he had was no concern of his, and for him to fall back to the rear of the company. This was done to prevent his returning to Jezreel with any information. The watchman told his master that the horseman had disappeared.

Verse 19. The second watchman was sent to meet the company, and he was commanded to do the same as the first.

Verse 20. The watchman reported

the circumstance to Joram. By this time the company was nearer, and he thought he could identify the leader. There is no other information available to me on the matter of Jehu's driving. It is evident, however, from the remark of the watchman, that he had a reputation of being a reckless driver.

Verse 21. The report of the watchman roused Joram to action. He ordered his war chariot to be made ready for travel. He and his royal guest, Ahaziah king of Judah, then went to intercept Jehu. Each of the kings was in his own chariot. They met in the field that belonged to Naboth, an interesting coincidence. In 1 Ki. 21 is the account of the murder of Naboth on the orders of Jezebel. Now her son is about to meet his fate at that very spot.

Verse 22. Upon their meeting, Joram inquired if the mission of Jehu was a peaceful one. His question was entirely inconsistent with other conditions with which he certainly was acquainted. *Whoredom* means the idolatrous practices of the people, under the encouragement of the wicked Jezebel. While such things were being permitted by Joram, it was a hypocritical question he asked.

Verse 23. When Joram heard the statement of Jehu he knew he was in danger. *Turned his hands* means he caused the chariot to be turned round, intending to flee; at the same time he gave warning to Ahaziah. *Treachery* means deceit or fraud. The definition would not justify Joram's use of the word; there was no underhanded action going on. Jehu was in the open and frankly coming against a wicked man. But it is a common trait of guilty persons to accuse others of intrusion, when they propose to interfere with the evil doing. See Ch. 11: 14; 1 Ki. 18: 17; Acts 7: 27.

Verse 24. Joram (which is the same as Jehoram) had turned to flee, which would expose his back to danger, that part of the body not being as well protected as the other. Jehu used his full reach and shot an arrow at his fleeing victim. It struck him between the shoulderblades with such force that it went through his body. As it penetrated the heart it caused instant death, and he sank down in his chariot.

Verse 25. The captain attending Jehu was told to fling the body out of his chariot, onto the field that had been the possession of Naboth. The

incident mentioned took place when Ahab was being pursued. At that time the Lord had put this *burden* (predicted punishment) on Joram. That was because he was "of Ahab" and thus came under the prediction of 1 Ki. 22: 24.

Verse 26. *Yesterday* is figurative and means "a short time ago." Naboth was murdered through a plot of Jezebel, and vengeance was to be had by casting the body of Joram, a son of Jezebel, on the same piece of ground that had been seized through unlawful bloodshed.

Verse 27. Ahaziah had been friendly with Joram, and had shown partizan interest in him by accompanying him in his attempt against Jehu. He not only must have felt guilty, but saw that his life was in danger. A garden house was a small building near a garden, built for the use of the keeper. It would not be a very conspicuous thing and seemed to offer a way for Ahaziah to escape. He succeeded in getting away from the immediate presence of Jehu; but he was seen, and the command was given to smite him in his chariot. They overtook him as he was trying to drive his chariot up an incline approaching Gur, a place near the city of Ibleam. At this place he was given a fatal stroke which did not result in instant death. He got away again and reached the city of Megiddo where he died from his wound.

Verse 28. Ahaziah was a king and died in office. His servants took his body in a chariot to Jerusalem, where he was buried in the family tomb.

Verse 29. This verse is parenthetical in thought, and is an item regarding the reign of Ahaziah, whose death was just recorded. By the aid of the marginal reading, and the reference to 2 Chr. 21: 18, 19, we learn he was acting ruler for his father who was seriously ill. After a year of such rule his father died, and he began to reign in his own rights. See Ch. 8: 24, 25.

Verse 30. According to the lexicons and various translations, the part of her face that Jezebel painted was her eyes; *tired* means "adorned." Thus we can see this wicked, idolatrous, murderous woman, with her head decorated and eyes gaudy with artificial coloring, impudently gazing from a window as Jehu approached the city.

Verse 31. The question Jezebel asked was a veiled threat against Jehu. She called him (figuratively) another

Zimri because he had slain his master, the king, as Zimri had done. But she perverted the facts about Zimri. It is true that his reign was short, just 7 days, and ended with suicide. But the troubles imposed upon him were not for his slaying his master. That was according to the will of the Lord and in fulfillment of an inspired prophecy. Please read 1 Ki. 16: 8-19. But in making this insinuating remark, Jezebel let her true mind be known, that she was in sympathy with the wicked men just slain by Jehu, who had been selected by the Lord to be king.

Verse 32. Primarily, a eunuch is a male who has been deprived of his manhood. Such persons were employed in the service of bedchambers, which were used by women as well as men. In time, however, the word came to mean any special and personal attendant, regardless of his physical condition. In response to Jehu's question, two or three of these servants appeared to his view.

Verse 33. Actions speak louder than words or looks. The eunuchs were told to act by casting the wicked woman down from the window. It must have been from the second story or higher. The fall brought her in contact with the wall with such violence that she was mangled and her blood was shed. It was sprayed over the wall and the chariot horses, and Jehu drove them over her body in contempt.

Verse 34. In respect for the royal line to which Jezebel belonged, Jehu directed that she be buried.

Verse 35. Almost the entire body had been eaten by the dogs. That fulfilled a prediction made by Elijah in 1 Ki. 21: 23, and quoted here.

Verses 36, 37. *Be as dung upon the face of the field.* This was true figuratively and literally. The absence of honorable burial, and the shameful and violent death imposed upon her, covered her memory with shame and suggested the article. Also, as the dogs made food of her body, it would be cast out upon the face of the ground with the other discharges of the bodies of the dogs.

## 2 KINGS 10

Verse 1. *Samaria* is used to refer to the kingdom of the 10 tribes because the city of that name was the capital. However, Ahab had chosen Jezreel as his personal residence (1 Ki. 21: 1), hence the word of Jehu was sent to that particular city. It was addressed

to the older men of influence, who had much to do with the rearing of Ahab's 70 sons. Normally, one of these sons should have inherited the throne.

Verses 2, 3. The Lord had decreed to change the royal line to the family of Jehu. The fleshly heirs to the throne might not have learned about it; or, if they had, they might wish to contest it. At any rate, Jehu did not intend to leave them any pretext for complaint. Should they have known about the situation and wish to defend their "rights," he was ready to fight the "best and meetest" of them.

Verse 4. I am sure their answer was about what Jehu expected. The *two kings* were Joram and Ahaziah. (Ch. 9: 24, 27).

Verse 5. The men to whom Jehu sent the letters were frightened by them. They humbly recognized him as their lord, and agreed to do whatsoever he would bid them.

Verse 6. *Be mine* is not in the original, and the King James' translators got the idea from the word for *hearken*. It is *SHAMA*, which is defined by Strong, "a primitive root; to hear intelligently (often with the implication of attention, obedience, etc.)." Jehu was taking them up on their profession of being his servants. Such persons are supposed to do what their masters command them. So therefore, make your word good and do as follows. Behead the 70 sons of Ahab and bring their heads to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow. A man with no head could never become a rival, and Jehu was not taking any chances with the future.

Verse 7. The men receiving the severe orders had ample opportunity for destroying the sons of Ahab, because they had them in charge and had been controlling them from their youth. They slew the men and sent the 70 heads to Jezreel.

Verse 8. We are not told the purpose of Jehu in directing the heads to be piled in two heaps. But we know one thing that was made possible, whether that was his motive or not. By having 35 instead of 70 heads in a pile, the exact number could be counted by the spectators. And by the exact count of the heads, the public would know that all of the royal seed had been destroyed, and that nothing was left but to accept Jehu as the lawful king.

Verse 9. *Righteous* is defined in the

lexicon as "just." It means that Jehu gave the people credit for being fair-minded, and able to form logical conclusions. He admitted having slain his master, the king reigning immediately before him. But here are the heads of that master's sons, and the question was, who had slain them? Jehu did not do it, neither had any of these people present done it. The conclusion ought to be easy for the people since they were fair-minded.

Verse 10. Without awaiting an expression from the people, Jehu attributed the circumstances to the Lord, and said it was the fulfillment of the prediction of Elijah.

Verse 11. Consistently with the foregoing conclusion, Jehu proceeded in his "purge" as predicted by the prophet. He killed the friends and relatives of Ahab that were in Jezreel, the former residence of the wicked king.

Verse 12. *Samaria* means the city of the name, as Jezreel was already in the territory of the kingdom whose capital was Samaria.

Verses 13, 14. Ahaziah was king of Judah and had been slain by Jehu. These relatives of Ahaziah made the mistake of sympathizing with the royal line of the former dynasty. The "purge" that Jehu had begun required that these persons also should be destroyed. The command was given for their slaying, which was carried out.

Verse 15. Jehu continued his journey toward Samaria, and on the way he met Jehonadab. *Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?* This was Jehu's way of saying, "Are you as willing to be my friend as I am to be yours?" Upon receiving a favorable answer, he took his hand and invited him into his chariot.

Verses 16, 17. *Made him ride* does not mean they forced him to ride. The first word is not in the original, but has been supplied by the translators. The thought of the whole passage is that Jehonadab was caused to ride in the chariot by the friendly attitude of Jehu. He was invited to witness the zeal that he was going to show for the Lord. They finally reached Samaria, the chief city of the kingdom. There were still some distant relatives of Ahab who might cause trouble for the new ruler. All of these were to be slain, fulfilling the prediction in 1 Ki. 21: 19, 21.

Verse 18. Jehu was taking this plan to get a complete roundup of the wor-



shippers of Baal, including all who merely sympathized with the idolatrous practices.

Verse 19. By threatening all with death who failed to respond, Jehu expected to make a complete assembly of the wanted victims. The motive of the man Jehu could be known by the inspired writer, and he tells us that it was to destroy the worshipers of Baal, and that his scheme was done in *subtlety* which is defined in the lexicon as "trickery." The motive was good and no undue advantage was taken of the people.

Verse 20. *Solemn assembly*. Both words are from *ATSEBETH* and Strong defines it, "an assembly, especially as a festival or holiday." To *proclaim* such an occasion meant not only to announce it to the public, but also to make preparation for it.

Verse 21. Upon pain of death, the worshipers of Baal responded to a man, and they were gathered in the house that had been used for the service to their false god.

Verse 22. The *vestments* were the garments worn by the worshipers of Baal. The act of receiving and wearing them was additional proof of their alliance with him.

Verse 23. This verse gives the climax to Jehu's plan to make a complete corralling of the idolaters. All who did not respond to the call at the start were to be put to death. On that principle, all of the halfhearted persons would be drawn over to take an evident stand for idolatry. The question might arise whether it was fair to use such measures. It was certainly fair, because in so doing no one would be drawn into the net except those who cared more for their temporal life than for righteousness. All such characters were no better than the active adherents of Baal. Jesus taught this idea in Matt. 12: 30.

Verse 24. The sacrifices for Baal were to take place in the house of Baal. While the services were going on, the place was guarded by 80 men. They were threatened with death if a man of the worshipers was allowed to escape.

Verse 25. The men with their officers who had been standing guard outside during the sacrifices, were next told to go and act as executioners. They were charged not to let one man escape. After they had been slain, their bodies were flung out of the building.

*City* is from a word with very wide meaning, including "a mere encampment or post." In this verse it has special reference to that part of the *house of God* where they had the images of Baal.

Verse 26. After slaying the worshipers of Baal, they brought out his images and burned them.

Verse 27. *Draught house* means a public rest room. While such a service is necessary for health and convenience, it was intended as a perpetual condemnation and shaming of idolatry.

Verse 28. "Honor to whom honor is due" is an old saying that has much meaning. The Lord will have the truth told about the evils of Jehu's life, at the same time he was given credit for the services he rendered to the nation of Israel.

Verse 29. Jehu destroyed the avowed worshipers of Baal, which was an important work. But the golden calves that Jeroboam placed at Bethel and Dan were suffered to remain. The religious use that was supposed to be the motive of the first king of the ten-tribe kingdom might have misled Jehu.

Verse 30. It is natural to be concerned about things that will happen after one's death. This was true as to the inheritance of a throne. Jehu had done much service for God and, as a reward for it, he was promised that his family line would continue to hold the throne to the *fourth generation*; this prediction was fulfilled. The four descendants in the family line from Jehu were Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II, and Zachariah. Ch. 15: 10 says that Shallum, son of Jabesh, slew the fourth and reigned instead.

Verse 31. Nothing is said about the personal life of Jehu except his idolatry. And that evil was not total, for the accusation was that he did not walk in the law of the Lord *with all his heart*; he did walk to some extent, however.

Verses 32, 33. God often used foreign nations to chastise his own. At this time he suffered Hazael, the Syrian king, to make inroads against several cities of Israel, and to destroy many of the citizens.

Verse 34. For *chronicles* see 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verses 35, 36. *Slept with his fathers* is explained at 1 Ki. 2: 10. The reason

Jehu was buried in Samaria was the fact that it was the capital of the 10 tribes, of which he had been king.

## 2 KINGS 11

Verse 1. Our study takes us to the kingdom of Judah again. See 1 Ki. 12: 17. *Seed royal* means the regular heirs to the throne. Athaliah was a wicked and ambitious woman. She craved authority, and sought to obtain it by murdering all the male heirs to the throne left vacant by the death of Ahaziah. That is, she intended to destroy, and thought she had destroyed, all of the royal seed. The fact that she missed one child did not make her guilt any the less.

Verses 2, 3. The escape of one intended victim was similar to the case of Gideon's son. (Judges 9: 5). Athaliah was a murderer and usurper, but is listed among the rulers of Judah. Her reign, however, will come to a violent end.

Verse 4. The priests under the Mosaic system were vested with much authority, and sometimes acted on behalf of others who were unable to act for themselves. Joash (also called Jehoash) was the one heir who escaped the murderous hand of Athaliah. He was hid for 6 years by Jehosheba, who was his aunt, also the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest. There is an interesting and informative article in the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia on this subject which will be quoted: "Jehoiada, high priest, and husband of Jehosheba, the aunt of Joash, who alone of the family of Ahaziah escaped the murderous hand of Athaliah (2 Kings 11: 1-12: 2). Jehoiada was the guardian of the young king, put him upon the throne, killed Athaliah, and, so long as he lived, so wisely directed Joash that all things went well."—Article, Jehoiada. After the 6 years of hiding, the high priest brought the youthful king forth. He called together the officers of different ranks and presented to them their lawful ruler, and obtained from them an oath of allegiance.

Verse 5. Jehoiada assigned the men to separate duties. In addition to the services of the holy days, they were to serve as guards for the king.

Verse 6. Not only must the king's house be guarded, but also the gates to the place. Sur was one of the gates, and another one was near the position of the guard.

Verse 7. Another group of service men was to be nearer the king.

Verse 8. These precautions were being taken because Jehoiada expected opposition from Athaliah or her sympathizers. The *ranges* means the proper bounds for would-be intruders. The service men were to be armed, and must slay any one trying to cross the limits. All of these arrangements were lawful, because they were on behalf of the lawful ruler, and against a usurper who was a murderer.

Verse 9. The officers obeyed the orders of the high priest, and presented the men under them to him.

Verse 10. The weapons that David had used might not have been any better than others. The psychological effect, however, on the men appointed for guard duty, would not be insignificant. The memory of David as a warrior was great.

Verse 11. The place described was an important one in the temple, and the guard took position there with full equipment, all set for any emergency that might spring up at the appearance of the king.

Verse 12. *Gave him the testimony.* This was the law, and giving it to the king was in line with Deut. 17: 18. This verse describes the ceremony of Joash's coronation, and its reception was indicated by the words, *God save the king.*

Verses 13, 14. The commotion attending the crowning of king Joash attracted the attention of Athaliah. She came to the temple to investigate. When she arrived she beheld the scene in all of its splendor and authority. *Treason, treason.* The act of only one person in opposing a government unlawfully would be treason. But the word here is from *GESHER*, and defined by Strong, "an (unlawful) alliance." It has been rendered in the A. V. by confederacy, conspiracy. It means that Athaliah not only accused the king, but others who were his allies. It is true that Joash and those with him were allied against Athaliah. But it was not true that it was treason, for that word requires that said alliance must be unlawful. Athaliah was a usurper and murderer, and it was not unlawful to overthrow her with force if necessary.

Verse 15. In respect for the temple, Jehoiada had directed that Athaliah not be slain there. She was to be taken outside, and if any person presumed

to follow who was not of the guard, he was to be slain.

Verse 16. It was not a very sentimental spot chosen for the execution of this wicked woman. She was slain at the gate where horses entered toward the king's house.

Verse 17. First we read of a covenant involving the Lord, the king, and the people. Then we have a covenant involving the king and the people. This does not imply any difference. It is a form of expression to show the unity of the whole government, and its being one compact system, each unit of which was necessary to the others. The same idea was taught by Jesus in Matt. 10: 40; Luke 10: 16.

Verse 18. It usually happens that an unlawful ruler will violate the laws of the very nation he assumes control over. During the reign of Athaliah, the worship of idols was again allowed to flourish. When she was out of the way, the people destroyed the instruments of such corrupt practices. The priest also appointed the proper kind of men to take charge of the Lord's house.

Verse 19. With a great throng of officers and people, Jehoiada gave the king dignified escort from the temple to the palace. There he sat on the throne that had been occupied by his predecessors.

Verse 20. This verse is merely a resume of the day's proceedings, with a statement of the general condition of the public mind.

Verse 21. It must be understood that the reign was by the priest. The king was an infant when he was tucked away by his aunt in her private apartment. When he was 7 years old, the demonstration described above was put on, and he began to be recognized as the next king. His duties, of course, were performed by the priest until he became old enough to rule on his own responsibility.

## 2 KINGS 12

Verse 1. Going back to the reign of Jehu, king of Israel (see 1 Ki. 12: 17) for a date, the writer gives the entire length of Joash's reign over Judah. His *mother's* name is explained at 1 Ki. 14: 21. The 40 years reign includes the ones of his childhood, when Jehoiada managed the kingdom for him.

Verse 2. The righteousness of the reign is attributed to the influence of

the priest. But it is commendable that he was willing to be guided by that righteous man.

Verse 3. The Lord never overestimates the good done by a man, any more than he does the evil. Joash gave the people a good administration, but he had a small defect in with the good. He did not remove the *high places*. However, that was a mild error, and further comments will be found on the subject at 1 Ki. 3: 2.

Verse 4. The verse as a whole means the money intended for the treasury, whether that specifically assessed upon the people (*that every man is set at*), or the voluntary contributions (*cometh into any man's heart*).

Verse 5. The priests were to collect this money from the men nearest in contact with them. The funds were to be used for repair of the house where such was needed.

Verse 6. Several years went by and the king discovered that the repairs which he had ordered had not been made. It appeared that the money had been taken from the people, but kept in the possession of the priests.

Verse 7. Joash called the priests into his presence and rebuked them for their neglect of duty, also for their retaining the money. He directed that no more money be delivered into their hands, but that arrangements be made to insure its proper use.

Verse 8. The priests agreed to the orders of the king. *Neither to repair*, etc. That means they were not to be considered as having direct responsibility for the repairs, since they had proved themselves untrustworthy. Instead, they were to take the money that was collected otherwise, and deliver it to the workmen, who were to appropriate it in their discretion about the repair work.

Verse 9. This chest was a kind of public receptacle for the money, to be used instead of the pockets of the priests. There is no intimation of actual fraud in the conduct of the priests. Their willing cooperation with the king in the plan ordered by him shows a good attitude. The situation was evidently one of carelessness.

Verse 10. When the chest was filled, the proper officers took charge of it and *told* or counted the money. It was put up in bags for safe handling and convenience.

Verses 11, 12. The money was delivered from the hands of the priests,

and put directly into those of the men having charge of the repair work. Some of it was used to buy necessary materials for the work, and some was to pay the workmen.

Verses 13, 14. 2 Chr. 24:14 states that some of this money was used to make such vessels as are mentioned in this verse. But the verse means that the money was first used for the repair work. When that was done, the balance was used for vessels.

Verse 15. The men who had been given the money were not reckoned with; that is, they were not "checked." They had given evidence of honesty and it was unnecessary to look into the accounts.

Verse 16. Money collected on account of trespass and sin was considered as the Lord's. See Lev. 4:24; 5:15. Such money could rightfully be used personally by the priests, as their support in the services about the temple worship.

Verse 17. Gath was a city in the Philistine territory; a place of much importance, west of Jerusalem. Hazael was the king of Syria, and he took possession of Gath. This success encouraged him to go on for more conquests, so he prepared to attack Jerusalem.

Verse 18. Hazael's motive was to obtain money or its equivalent rather than power or territory, for he left the community as soon as he received those chattels. It was a regrettable thing for Jehoash (Joash) to take all those valuable things that had been accumulated by former kings. However, that was better than suffering the house of the Lord (temple), and the king's house (palace), to be destroyed.

Verse 19. *Chronicles* is explained at 1 Ki. 14:19.

Verses 20, 21. Murder, assassination, suicide, and other forms of violence, were not very uncommon in ancient times. No motive is given us for the conspiracy of the servants against Joash. Since the son was permitted to take the throne, who was the rightful heir, we know the motive was not desire for power. Sometimes a servant gets peeved from enforced labor and rises in violent rebellion. *Millo* was a fortified place in that part of Jerusalem called "the city of David." Silla is from *cilla*, and Strong says it is from still another Hebrew word meaning "an embankment." Being the king,

it would not be strange that Joash would be in that place. But the conspirators selected a time when their victim was in the open, on his way from the tower to this embankment. The city of David was the proper place for the burial. It was where his royal ancestors were buried, it was the headquarters of the kingdom, and where he died.

## 2 KINGS 13

Verse 1. Since Joash reigned 40 years, this verse takes us to about the middle of his reign. And, as Jehoahaz reigned only 17 years, the reign of Joash was still going at the death of Jehoahaz. See 1 Ki. 12:17 in regard to this alternation.

Verse 2. This king was worse than some others of Israel. Like the others, he allowed himself to be influenced by the example of the first king, Jeroboam, who not only did wrong personally, but caused the people of Israel to sin.

Verse 3. Hazael and Ben-hadad, his son, each reigned in turn over Syria. Because of their many sins, God suffered his people to be punished by these Syrian kings.

Verse 4. The preceding verse is a general statement, covering a long period of punishment for his people, but not giving any details. Some of them will be given below, after the narrative is intercepted to relate the merciful answer of God to prayer.

Verse 5. In answer to the prayer of Jehoahaz, God gave his people a *savior*. The word is from one that is elsewhere rendered "deliverer," and refers to some military leader who led the Israelites to victory over their oppressors. *Tents* is from a word that means homes in general. After the oppression was lifted, Israel lived in their homes *as beforetime*. Not that they had been entirely driven from their homes, but life in them was not like it was after being delivered from the Syrians.

Verse 6. Ingratitude is a common weakness of mankind. Notwithstanding the favor of the Lord, the nation of Israel continued in its idolatry. *The grove* was the place used to shelter the idols, and for the activities of the idolatrous religion.

Verse 7. Having halted in the account to tell us of the goodness of God toward his disobedient people, the writer gives some details of the oppression. All of the army of Jehoahaz



that was left him was what is listed in this verse. After a row of wheat has been threshed out by beating, nothing but light dust would be left. That is used to compare the depleted condition of the army after the Syrians got through with it.

Verse 8. Jehoahaz was no insignificant king, and reference is made to his *might*, which means his valor and success against his foes. See 1 Ki. 14: 19 on *chronicles*.

Verse 9. *Slept with his fathers* is treated at 1 Ki. 2: 10. He was buried in Samaria because that was the capital of his realm. *Joash*, his son, also called Jehoash, should not be confused with the man by the same name who was king of Judah. (Ch. 12: 1).

Verse 10. See comments in the preceding verse on two men named Joash; also 1 Ki. 12: 17.

Verse 11. It is bad enough to commit evil occasionally. But Jehoash (or Joash) *walked therein*. That indicated a general practice of life. A statement made here and at many other places, is that a man did evil *in the sight of the Lord*. The actions of a man may be good in the opinion of another, yet be evil in the Lord's sight. Jesus said something about that in Luke 16: 15.

Verse 12. The *might* of Joash is mentioned, as it was in the case of Jehoahaz; but in this a specification is given. His war with a king of Judah is merely mentioned, but will be described in the next chapter.

Verse 13. For purposes of distinction, this new king should be known as Jeroboam II. Joash *slept* according to 1 Ki. 2: 10, and was buried in Samaria, the capital.

Verse 14. We have more than once observed that the Bible is not as strictly chronological as we would think of writing a book. That does not affect its truthfulness, but it does make it necessary for us to use care in our study. The preceding two verses gave a summing up of the life of Joash. The present one goes back to some incidents in his life. He heard of the serious illness of the prophet Elisha, and called to see him. The kings and other men in public life depended on the national prophets for guidance. That is why Joash called him *my father*, meaning a term of respect. *The chariot of Israel*, etc. This means he considered Elisha to be worth as much to Israel as their whole military. See Ch. 2: 12 and comments on this thought.

Verses 15, 16. At 1 Ki. 20: 35 some thoughts are offered on the subject of prophets "acting." The same idea is present here, except that the prophet authorizes and enables the king to do the acting.

Verse 17. The window looking eastward was opened because the Syrian territory was in that direction. Aphek was a city where the war forces had met previously (1 Ki. 20: 26), and will again witness an encounter between Israel and Syria.

Verses 18, 19. This is some more acting. (Verses 15, 16). When a supernatural result is connected with an arbitrary and illogical means, the extent of the human contribution is considered. See the case of the vessels for oil, Ch. 4: 6. The success of Israel's arms will be limited by the number of times the king strikes the ground. Not that God is actually aided by the work of man, but to teach the lesson of man's responsibility in his cooperation with the Lord.

Verse 20. The burial of Elisha and the Moabite invasion have no connection with each other in this verse, but are mentioned preparatory to the following.

Verse 21. A funeral procession was going on when they spied a band of *men*. These words are not in the original, but the previous verse authorizes their use, and we could properly add, "of Moabites." The panic at sight of the invaders caused the pallbearers to seek a hiding place for the body. Sepulchres are described as follows in Smith's Bible Dictionary: "A natural cave enlarged and adapted by excavation, or an artificial imitation of one, was the standard type of sepulchre. Sepulchres, when the owner's means permitted it, were commonly prepared beforehand, and stood often in gardens, by roadsides, or even adjoining houses."

—Article, Burial. From the nature of these sepulchres, we can understand how they could be entered, in much the same way that one can enter a modern mausoleum. The tomb of Jesus could be entered in this way. And it also explains how more than one person could be "buried" in the same place. (Gen. 49: 31). *Bones* does not mean that the flesh of Elisha had been literally decayed; the word means the body. There was nothing magical in the body of a prophet to restore life, else a general use could be made of such a body. The Lord willed this

demonstration of his respect for the prophet.

Verses 22, 23. This history is a repetition of verses 3-5. But in this place is added a motive for the Lord's regard for the nation, the memory of the fathers.

Verse 24. This Hazael was a servant of a former Ben-hadad, whom he murdered and reigned in his stead. (Ch. 8: 15). He had a son whom he called by the same name his slain master had worn.

Verse 25. Again the writer ignores chronology and takes us back a few years. Jehoash had died in V. 13, but his father, Jehoahaz, had lost some cities to Ben-hadad, king of Syria. Hazael had been succeeded by his son Ben-hadad, and Jehoahaz was followed by his son Jehoash. The writer is telling us that Jehoash recovered these cities, carrying out three successful campaigns.

## 2 KINGS 14

Verse 1. The reader must never forget the zigzag character of this history, and should frequently refer to 1 Ki. 12: 17 and the comments. Because of this style of recording, the same man and events will be mentioned more than once. Furthermore, it should be remembered that different men had the same name. Thus, in the present verse, we have Joash as the name of two kings; one of the kingdom of Israel, and the other of the kingdom of Judah.

Verse 2. Jerusalem was the capital of Judah where Amaziah reigned. Mention of his mother is explained at 1 Ki. 14: 21.

Verse 3. Both David and Joash are called the father of Amaziah. The latter was his father by bodily offspring, and the former in the sense of an ancestor. Both were good men and served the Lord, but David served him better. Amaziah imitated the latter father rather than the former.

Verse 4. One defect in the reign of Amaziah was the retention of the *high places*. For notes on that term see 1 Ki. 3: 2.

Verse 5. The first official act of Amaziah was to execute the murderers of his father. That crime is recorded in Ch. 12: 20, 21.

Verse 6. Individual responsibility is taught in this law. Moses enacted the law and the king respected it.

Verse 7. *Slew of Edom* means he

slew the Edomites, who were located near the south of the Dead Sea, which gave the name of *valley of salt* to the place. *Seiah* was a city in that section that was based on rock formation. It was the most important city of the Edomites and had been fortified. Amaziah took possession of it and called it Joktheel, a word meaning the "good will of God." He doubtless attributed his success in that campaign to the goodness of God.

Verse 8. *Look one another in the face* was a form of challenge to battle. Amaziah was flushed by his victory over the Edomites, and let it lead him into rashness.

Verse 9. "Cedars of Lebanon" has long been a synonym for that which is lofty, elegant, and useful. A thistle would be an opposite of a cedar. Joash used the fable to illustrate the proposal of Amaziah. He likened himself to the cedar and Amaziah to the thistle. For a thistle to ask a cedar's daughter as a wife for his own son, would be about as appropriate as for Amaziah to challenge Jehoash to combat. The king of Israel continued his comparison by an implied prediction that if they came to battle, the challenger would be defeated and brought to shame.

Verse 10. Jehoash accused Amaziah of being puffed up because of his victory over Edom. *Glory of this and tarry at home* means that he ought to be contented with such glory, and remain at home.

Verse 11. Amaziah would not take the advice of Jehoash, so the two came together. *Looked one another in the face* means they came face to face on the field of battle.

Verse 12. When a man has been killed he cannot flee to his tent. The verse means that so many were killed that all the rest fled in fear.

Verse 13. Note the care that is taken to designate which kingdom and which Jehoash (Joash) is meant. It is because of the same thoughts treated at 1 Ki. 12: 17. Having taken the king alive, Jehoash took his captive to his capital, Jerusalem, and made great havoc of the city. The wall had a number of gates, each one bearing some particular name. The purpose for mentioning this one was to designate the part of the wall attacked, and also the extent of the damage. It was from this gate to the one at the corner of the wall, and the distance was about 600 feet.

Verse 14. The precious metals and the vessels were taken as spoils of war. *Hostages* is from two original words, and the meaning is "pledges." Some kind of surety was exacted from Amaziah, to the effect that he would not disturb Samaria again.

Verses 15, 16. This is the same as Ch. 13: 12, 13.

Verses 17-20. Verse 14 of this chapter left Amaziah in Jerusalem, his capital. This paragraph gives us the account of his death. Personal enemies conspired against him and threatened his life. He escaped temporarily and got to Lachish, but the conspirators followed him and killed him there. He was brought back on horses, and buried in Jerusalem. See 1 Ki. 14: 19 for *Chronicles*.

Verse 21. We are not told the motive for killing Amaziah. We know, however, it was not to change the dynasty or family line, for they placed his son on the throne.

Verse 22. Having introduced the king Azariah (also called Uzziah), the writer mentions one item of his reign, the rebuilding of the city Elath. He then drops the history of his reign to take up the reign of a king on the other side of the divided kingdom, or, the kingdom of Israel. We will read of some incidents which took place there, after which the account will come back to Azariah in Jerusalem. See 1 Ki. 12: 17.

Verses 23, 24. Two men named Jeroboam are mentioned in this paragraph. Since they occupied the same throne at various times, the last named should be known as Jeroboam II. No man is justified for evil doing on account of the influence of another. But frequent mention is made of the kings who followed the example of the first king over the 10 tribes. The lesson to be had is in observing the far-reaching influence of a wicked character. Paul taught that fact in 1 Cor. 15: 33.

Verse 25. The word for *coast* in the original means "boundary," whether a writer is considering the territory of land or water. The line of the kingdom of Israel had been pushed back; Jeroboam restored it to its former survey. *Hamath* was a place in Syria near the territory of Israel, and the *sea of the plain* was the Salt or Dead Sea. A long boundary line had been infringed upon, and Jeroboam restored it. This prophecy of Jonah is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Verse 26. *Shut up* is a term meaning "maintained," and *any left* means about the same. The whole passage means that the foreign nations had so oppressed them that no helper seemed in sight until Jeroboam came to the rescue.

Verse 27. God often gave his people some bitter punishment through the instrumentality of the heathen nations. He never did threaten to blot out their name entirely. When the chastisement had been sufficient in his eyes, he would strengthen some man for the work of relief. That is what was done through the services of Jeroboam.

Verse 28. *Recovered Damascus*. That was a city of Syria, and never was considered as a part of the territory of Israel. But sometimes the neighboring nations were brought under a form of subjection to the children of Israel. That had been done in the case of Damascus, according to 2 Sam. 8: 5, 6. What Jeroboam did was to restore that subjection. *Chronicles* is explained at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verse 29. *Slept with his fathers* is explained at 1 Ki. 2: 10.

## 2 KINGS 15

Verses 1-3. Azariah (Uzziah) had a long reign (52 years), yet part of a chapter only is devoted to his history. Even in the book of *Chronicles*, one chapter (26th) only is used. The affairs of a reign may be important, but if they are not of a military nature, the historians do not pay so much attention to them. Some writer has coined the remark, "Happy is that nation whose annals are brief." Azariah is included among the good kings of Judah, although he made some mistakes for which he suffered.

Verse 4. Retaining the *high places* was one of the defects of Azariah's reign. See comments on these places at 1 Ki. 3: 2.

Verse 5. The occasion for this leprosy is recorded in 2 Chr. 26: 20-23. *Dwelt in a several (separate) house* was according to the law of Moses. (Lev. 13: 46). Because of this quarantine regulation, the king could not come in contact with the people, and his son acted in his stead.

Verse 6. The *Chronicles* here mentioned should not be confused with the book of that name in our Bible, and referred to above. For this word see 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verse 7. *Slept with his fathers*. (1 Ki. 2: 10). The city of David was the

part of Jerusalem that David had selected for his headquarters, and was the center of attraction on various accounts. Jotham reigned in his own right after the death of his father. He had been acting king since the leprosy came upon his father.

Verses 8, 9. This chapter gives the names of all the remaining kings of Israel. None of them had a long reign, and some were short. Assassination was a common thing through those years, and the life of a king was uncertain. Since Azariah reigned over Judah so long, he will be referred to in dating the reigns of all the kings of Israel mentioned in this chapter except the last one. The death of Azariah (Uzziah) is recorded in V. 7, and the writer then goes back into the years of his reign to take up the line of the kings of Israel. See again 1 Ki. 12: 17.

Verse 10. The family line was broken off by violence more than once in the period covered by this chapter. Some of the conspiracies were open and brazen, such as the present case. *Smote* and *slew* are used as if they were different in meaning; they differ in degree only. To smite could mean only to wound, while to slay would be fatal.

Verse 11. This *chronicles* is the document explained at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verse 12. This verse fulfills a promise made to Jehu. See Ch. 10: 30 and comments.

Verse 13. *Full month*. The first word seems an emphatic term, yet the reign of this king was by far the shortest of all. The word is from *rom* and translated "day" 1167 times in the A. V. Since the reign of this king was a matter of days only, it was proper to state the exact number of them. The marginal reading, "a month of days" is a correct rendering.

Verse 14. The family line was again broken, and the throne fell into that of Gadi. This man lived at Tirzah, which is significant with the assassination since that city was once the capital of Israel. See 1 Ki. 15: 33; 16: 8.

Verse 15. The acts of Shallum in general are mentioned, while his conspiracy is given special notice. They were all recorded in the greater fullness in the *chronicles* we have spoken about so frequently.

Verse 16. These actions were in the line of conquest, but in the form of violence. The *coasts* or regions about Tiphshah and Tirzah were attacked thus

to overcome their resistance to the new king. His brutal treatment of expectant mothers could not be condoned by any kind of motive. However, it was not purely for the sake of brutality that he did it. His main object was to prevent the increase of children who might grow up to oppose him. But even if that were his expectation, he did not reign long enough to realize it, for it continued for ten years only.

Verses 17, 18. This reign was longer than those of his two predecessors, but was not long enough to accomplish all of his plans. Like most of the kings of Israel, he followed in the steps of the first king.

Verse 19. Assyria was a kingdom in the territory of the Euphrates River, and should not be confused with Syria that was just north of Israel. Pul, king of Assyria, came up to attack the king of Israel and dethrone him. He might have attempted it had he not been bought off. Money is a mighty power, and Pul agreed with Menahem for that sort of consideration.

Verse 20. The money was raised by a heavy levy of taxes against the wealthy Israelites. With that inducement, Pul returned to Assyria.

Verses 21, 22. There was not much to say about the reign of Menahem. A fuller account could have been seen by those interested in those days, by reading the *chronicles* as explained at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verses 23, 24. The long reign of Azariah (Uzziah) was about ended in Judah, when Pekahiah began to reign over Israel. He repeated the usual practices of kings in that period, and followed the example of Jeroboam, the first king of the 10 tribes.

Verse 25. The throne was again diverted from the family line by assassination, a common occurrence then. The murderer had been in an important relation with the king, that of captain in the army. He took advantage of his rank and slew his master. *Palace* means a fortress of defense for the king's house. Being engaged as defender of the king and the nation, Pekah had an easy access to the monarch. The two men named were accomplices of Pekah, and, with the backing of 50 men of the Gileadites, dethroned the king.

Verse 26. So unimportant was the reign of Pekahiah that no act of his was recorded in the inspired record.



The only way of reading about him was by the *chronicles* explained at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verses 27, 28. As king Azariah was ending his long reign over Judah, Pekah began his reign over Israel. His reign, like that of his predecessor, ended with murder.

Verse 29. The cities named were depopulated by the king of Assyria, and the inhabitants taken to his country, which was beyond the Euphrates River. This is not to be regarded as a national captivity; that tragedy will take place in the reign of the next king of Israel. But the Lord was so displeased at the general corruption of the kingdom that he suffered this foretaste of their trials to come upon them.

Verse 30. See comments at V. 10 on the difference between *smote* and *slew*. Hoshea was the last king of Israel, or the kingdom of the 10 tribes, and is merely introduced in this verse. His history will be dropped for the present, then resumed after relating that of some kings of Judah.

Verse 31. Nothing further of importance is recorded here of the reign of Pekah. But a brief mention is made of him in 1 Chr. 5: 26, and in the national *chronicles*, explained at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verses 32-34. The narrative switches back to the kingdom of Judah. (1 Ki. 12: 17). The long reign of Uzziah (Azariah) had ended, and his son Jotham was on the throne. He was considered one of the good kings, as was his father before him. *His mother's* name is given for reasons explained at 1 Ki. 14: 21.

Verse 35. For comments on *high places* see 1 Ki. 3: 2. Among the good things Uzziah did was to build an elevated entrance to the house of God.

Verse 36. Some account is given of Jotham in 2 Chr. 27: 7 of our Bible, and further information was given in the *chronicles* of the nation, already explained often in this volume and at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verse 37. A partial punishment was suffered to come upon Judah from the king of Syria. That was the kingdom just north of the land of Israel.

Verse 38. *Slept with his fathers* is explained at 1 Ki. 2: 10. *City of David* is also called Zion. It was the most important division of Jerusalem, and the site of the temple and other official structures.

## 2 KINGS 16

Verses 1, 2. The reign of Ahaz in Judah is dated from that of a king in Israel. See the remarks at 1 Ki. 12: 17. His conduct was not right *in the sight of God*, whether man approved of it or not. David was called his father in the sense of an ancestor.

Verse 3. The horrible practice of human sacrifice was done by the heathen, but it should have been far beneath men who had been instructed of the Lord. However, it was a liability and actually was committed by them, otherwise there would not have been the occasion for the warning against it. Read Lev. 3: 21; Deut. 12: 31; 18: 10; 2 Ki. 17: 17; 21: 6; 2 Chr. 33: 6; Jer. 7: 31; 19: 5.

Verse 4. See 1 Ki. 3: 2 for comments on *high places*.

Verse 5. Sometimes one of the divisions of the nation of Israelites would ally itself with a heathen nation, and they would attack the other division. Here the king of Israel and the king of Syria came against Jerusalem, whose king was Ahaz; their attempt failed because that city was so well fortified.

Verse 6. Failing in the action at Jerusalem, the king of Syria turned his attention to Elath, a city that had become the possession of Judah under Azariah. (Ch. 14: 22). It was recovered from the king of Judah, and the Jewish inhabitants were driven out, and their places taken by Syrians.

Verse 7. Israel and Syria had formed an alliance against Judah. Now the latter proposed an alliance with Assyria, against the other Jewish kingdom. *I am thy servant and thy son* just meant that he was willing to grant him great favor if he would help him out of his difficulty with Israel and Syria.

Verse 8. Ahaz proved his proposition was sincere, by taking the valuables from the Lord's house, and sending them as a "present" (Gen. 32: 13) to the king of Assyria.

Verse 9. The king of Assyria responded to the money inducement, and came against Damascus. That city was the capital of Syria, and by reducing it, the king of Judah would be relieved.

Verse 10. The king of Assyria had done Ahaz a favor at Damascus, and he went to that city to greet his ally. While at that place he saw an altar.

It must have been erected for idolatry, for the Syrians were not worshipers of God. Ahaz was interested in the style of the altar and wished one like it for his own use. Accordingly, he sent a description of it to the priest at Jerusalem.

Verse 11. Ahaz must have sent instructions for the priest to make a like altar, for he had it done by the time the king returned.

Verse 12. The inspired writer is giving an account of the actions of Ahaz from the standpoint of history, not that he approved of them. We were told in Vs. 2, 3 that he was an unrighteous king, and the movements being described in these few verses are in keeping with the general description of him. Like many professed servants of God today, Ahaz mixed his own devices with the divine arrangements.

Verse 13. The offerings named were all commanded in the law of Moses. The *burnt offering* in Lev. 1: 3; the *drink offering* in Ex. 29: 40; and *peace offering* in Lev. 3: 1. While the offerings were of divine origin, the proper place for their devotion was also divinely stipulated. But Ahaz had already departed from God, so this corruption of the divine services is not surprising.

Verse 14. The word *altar* occurs three times in this verse. The first and third refer to the brazen altar that Solomon had made; the second is the one Urijah had just made. Ahaz had put the new altar in front of the brazen altar, so that the brazen one was between the house of the Lord and the new altar. Now, Ahaz moved the brazen altar from where it was, and placed it north of the new altar.

Verses 15, 16. The *great altar* was the new one that had been made at the king's commandment. He changed the ordinances of God and substituted his own inventions. All the offerings mentioned were prescribed by the law. The *morning burnt offering* was known elsewhere as the "daily sacrifice." The *meat offering* was the one composed of grain, and described in Lev. 2. The brazen altar, the one that Solomon made under the blessing of God, was to be used only to *enquire by*. That meant Ahaz thought he could use it as a sort of supernatural means of communication with God. There was no authority for such a notion, and no evidence that it was ever recognized by the Lord. It was just another item

in the long list of departures from the divine system.

Verse 17. Ahaz had launched out on an adventure of innovations and went to great lengths for the purpose of being different. Read 1 Ki. 7 for a description of the pieces named in this verse. This mutilation of the sacred articles was to get the materials for the king of Assyria. The *sea* was the large tank that Solomon made to contain water. It was supported by 12 brazen oxen. (1 Ki. 7: 25). Ahaz discarded all these valuable pieces of metal and let the sea rest on a foundation of stones.

Verse 18. *Covert* is from MEYCAK and Strong defines it, "a portico (as covered)." Young defines it, "a covered walk." This was an addition to the house of the Lord that *they had built*, meaning some people of more recent times. There is nothing said about this place in the works of Solomon. It could well be likened to the covered entrance seen today, conducting guests from the street to the entrance door of public buildings. This one was built for the special use on the holy days. The materials used in it were turned over to the king of Assyria.

Verses 19, 20. *Chronicles* is the same as explained at 1 Ki. 14: 19, and *slept with his fathers* has notes at 1 Ki. 2: 10.

## 2 KINGS 17

Verse 1. In the margin of many of our Bibles we have a note, stating that Hoshea began to reign after an interregnum, meaning an interval. Ch. 15: 30 states that he slew the king in the 20th year of Jotham. The present verse says he began to reign in the 12th year of Ahaz. A look at the chronology will show a space of 10 years. This fact also recalls the comments in this volume at Ch. 15: 30. The history of Judah will be dropped for a few verses, to take up that of Hoshea in the kingdom of Israel.

Verse 2. God always recognizes any merit in his people; Hoshea was one of the bad kings of Israel, but not as bad as his predecessors. We should have in mind the idea that, as far as spiritual outcome is concerned, the Bible makes no distinction between big and little sins. But the Mosaic system was both spiritual and temporal. It made some difference, therefore, that a ruler was not as bad as another; the people under him would fare better in their national life.

Verse 3. This was Shalmaneser IV, according to George Rawlinson, who says that the Assyrian king began his reign in 727 B. C., and that he led several expeditions into Palestine. It was on one of them that he forced Hoshea to become a tributary to Assyria; which is meant by the words *gave him presents*. It constituted a form of political subjection to Assyria, with an agreement to continue the payments of the "presents."

Verse 4. Hoshea broke his covenant with Shalmaneser, which was indicated by his discontinuance of the tribute or "presents." As a reinforcement in his revolt from Assyria, Hoshea appealed to Egypt, but there is no evidence that it did him any good. The king of Assyria took him into custody and put him into prison.

Verse 5. Personal imprisonment of Hoshea was not enough to satisfy the king of Assyria. The reduction of the capital and citizens of the nation was planned. For that purpose a siege was begun about Samaria, which continued three years. Smith's Bible Dictionary states that Shalmaneser lost his crown to Sargon about this time. It is not clear in history whether the former or the latter king of Assyria was in power at the close of the siege. In the 3rd verse the inspired writer states that Shalmaneser was the one who started the siege, and all history agrees with it. In the 6th verse the same writer merely states that the *king of Assyria* came up, leaving it an open question which king is meant. But since it is pretty definite that not more than a year's margin is probable, it will be reasonable to attribute the following performances to Sargon, who had usurped the throne from Shalmaneser.

Verse 6. The events of the whole chapter have to do with the great tragedy of the Assyrian captivity, and the details will be discussed as we pass from verse to verse. But a suggestion will be made to those who are marking their Bibles. This verse may properly be marked, "Assyrian Captivity of the 10 Tribes." Gozan is defined by Strong, "a province of Assyria." The river of Gozan would mean a river flowing in that province, and is a tributary of the Euphrates, and the cities of Halah and Habor were on that stream. Media was a small power located in that general territory, and some of the Israelites were placed in cities there after being taken captive.

Verses 7, 8. Reference is made to

the deliverance from Egypt to call attention to their ingratitude. It also exposes the folly of turning from a God who can do such things, to those who have no power. *Which they had made* means the things the heathen had practiced for religion.

Verse 9. Nothing can be hid from God. When men think to hide from him, however, it is accounted as bad as if they actually did so. *From the tower of the watchman to the fenced city*. Small towns depended on watch-towers for protection, while the fenced (walled) cities had the more extensive kind of protection. The phrase means they made these provisions for idolatry at all of such localities.

Verse 10. We usually think of a grove as a group of trees. But the word *grove* here means an image of some goddess, which they erected under the trees.

Verses 11, 12. *High places* is explained at 1 Ki. 3:2. Idolatry was wrong, even when instigated by the professed servants of God. What made it still more grievous to the Lord was the borrowing it from the heathen about them.

Verse 13. The Israelites could not plead ignorance as an excuse, for the Lord had repeatedly warned them. There was not much difference between a *prophet* and a *seer*, and the words are used interchangeably in the Bible. The slight distinction is, the latter may mean an inspired man merely, while the former includes some authority.

Verse 14. *Hardened their necks* means they became stubborn.

Verse 15. *Statutes* means the specific enactments of God, and *covenant* means an agreement or promise that was made, on condition of their obedience. *Testimonies* means the same law referred to by other terms. The special idea is that the law had been confirmed by the oath and proof of the Lord. It may be expressed by saying it had been divinely notarized. *Vanity* means that which is useless, and following it makes persons vain or useless in the sight of God.

Verse 16. These calves were not the first metallic images the Israelites made, but they were the beginning of their practice as the kingdom of Israel. (1 Ki. 12:28). Care must be had when considering *grove* in connection with idolatry. The word is from ASHERAH and Strong defines it, Ash-

erah (or Astarte) a Phœnician goddess; also an image of the same." Young defines it, "a shrine." Smith's Bible Dictionary says of grove, "It is also probable that there was a connection between this symbol or image, and the sacred symbolic tree, the representation of which occurs so frequently on Assyrian sculptures." The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia says in part, under *Groves and Trees, Sacred*: "In the Hebrew Old Testament there is no mention of sacred groves, for the word so translated in the A. V. means properly an image to Asherah; but sacred trees are repeatedly mentioned.

... *Worship under trees was commonly idolatrous.*" Because of the facts named above, groves, trees, and oaks are used in the Bible generally to refer to idolatry, when used figuratively. This is true whether natural or artificial trees is meant. *Host of heaven* means the sun and other heavenly bodies.

Verse 17. *Pass through the fire* is explained at 2 Ki. 16: 3. *Divination* was the same as witchcraft, or some form of trickery. *Enchantments* was similar to divination, and meant the practice of magic. *Sold themselves* means they surrendered themselves to a life of evil. *To provoke him* does not necessarily mean they did it for that purpose, but that was the effect their evil conduct had on Him.

Verse 18. Judah was mentioned as being the only tribe left. That is a comparative term, and used because it was by far a stronger tribe than Benjamin.

Verses 19, 20. Judah had some good kings which caused God to delay their captivity. But they were guilty, and walked in the statutes which the 10 tribes had made. Altogether, the children became so corrupt that God suffered them to be oppressed by the foreign nations, and finally cast out of his sight, which means out of the land of Canaan, since that land represented the presence of God on earth.

Verse 21. *Israel* means the 10 tribes as a separate kingdom. They were torn from the other two, because the king in Judah was rash. After being separated from Judah, or the house of David, the 10 tribes appointed a wicked man, Jeroboam, to be their king. And this wicked king made them sin, which means he caused them to sin.

Verses 22, 23. This is a summing up of the subject matter pertaining to the

Assyrian captivity and the causes. We are told that such a calamity had been predicted by the prophets. *Unto this day* means up to the date of this writing, which was about 600 B. C. according to the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia.

Verse 24. The reader should consider verses 24-33 as one paragraph, in a general setting, its subject to be named later. But we shall study the verses separately first. The land had been depopulated by the captivity, and taken over by the Assyrian king. He wished the country to be occupied by other people of his own choosing. The places named were cities or provinces mostly in the Assyrian kingdom, or other localities under its domination.

Verse 25. *Fear not the Lord.* In its full sense, to fear the Lord means to love and respect and obey him. In a restricted sense, it means to respect to the extent of standing in awe of the Lord. These newcomers did not fear the Lord even to that extent. In punishment, God sent wild beasts to destroy some of them. It was not to be expected that these heathen would become a group of fully devoted servants under the Mosaic system. But it was right to expect them to respect the God of the land.

Verse 26. *Manner* is from MISPHAT which has a wide variety of meaning. In the present connection it has the force of law or requirement. It was one of the notions of idolaters that different countries and provinces had their own peculiar gods. These gods might differ from each other in their wishes and requirements. In order to get along with any of these deities it was necessary to comply with their personal demands. It would be impossible to do that, unless one knew those tastes and demands. Of course these immigrants were not acquainted with the god of their newly found country, hence had failed to please him, which brought the misfortune of the wild beasts.

Verses 27, 28. It was logical to think of the priests for the purpose suggested to the Assyrian king. They were the men supposed not only to understand, but to preside over the services given to a god. Accordingly, one of the priests whom they had taken from Samaria, which was the capital, was returned to the land. Bethel was a prominent place, it being where one of the golden calves had been erected by Jeroboam. Here the priest informed



them as to the God of that country (which means, of course, the God of the Hebrews). They were told to fear or regard him.

Verse 29. *Every nation* has reference to the various places from which the king of Assyria had taken people to occupy the cities of Israel. The newcomers used these places for their services, but each particular group erected its own kind of idol.

Verses 30, 31. According to the statements at V. 29, the several localities named here made images according to their own personal choice. The words listed are names of various deities, each of which had some peculiar form of worship. One group had adopted that of human sacrifices. See 2 Ki. 16: 3 for comments on that subject.

Verses 32, 33. *Feared the Lord* in the limited sense as explained at V. 25. In connection with that, they continued their services to idols. It was a combination of idolatry and the acknowledgement of the God of the Hebrews. This is how the Samaritan religion got started. In course of time some Jewish blood got mixed with the foreign type, so that the national complexion was affected thereby. This is the place to give the name of the paragraph of verses 24-33, promised above. Those who are marking their Bibles may title this paragraph, "Origin of the Samaritan Nation and Religion." It is proper to state, before considering the rest of the chapter, that the Samaritans did not always remain idolaters. We shall quote from Prideaux's *Connexion*, for the year 676. "But they (the nations sent to replace the tribes of Israel) only took him (the God of Israel) hereon into the number of their former deities and worshiped him jointly with the gods of the nation from whence they came; and in this corruption of joining the worship of their false gods with that of the true they continued, till the building of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim by Sanballat; but, on that occasion, abundance of Jews falling off to them, they reduced them from this idolatry to the worship of the true God only, as shall hereafter be related; and they have continued in the same worship ever since even to this day." We shall return from this digression to the affairs of the Samaritans as treated in this chapter.

Verse 34. *Unto this day* means the date of the writing. *Feared not the*

*Lord* in the true sense of faithful service as described at V. 25. *Statutes, ordinances, law and commandments*, means the requirements of the law of Moses.

Verse 35. The former citizens of this territory had been deported because they violated the covenant God made with them. Now the new citizens were not profiting by their experience, but doing the same as they did.

Verse 36. This was not said directly to the Samaritans. It is cited for the reader, explanatory of the statement in the preceding verse.

Verses 37, 38. The warnings given the Israelites very specifically pointed out the practices of the nations of the places through which they must travel.

Verses 39, 40. The very nations whose idolatry they were warned against, could have no power over the people of God, unless they proved unfaithful. In that case, the Lord would use those heathen nations as scourges to punish his own people.

Verse 41. *These nations* means the idolaters brought in to take the place of the former citizens. They had been removed because of the very practices now being done by the new occupants. It is remarkable how little effect a stern lesson sometimes has.

## 2 KINGS 18

Verse 1. We have just read of the captivity of Israel, with their last king, Hoshea. Now we are reading of events that happened in the *third year of Hoshea*. This makes us recall the note at 1 Ki. 12: 17. From here on to the end of the book we will not be reading about the kingdom of Israel, except as an incidental reference from the main subject, the history of Judah.

Verse 2. The name of this king's mother is given for the reason explained at 1 Ki. 14: 21.

Verse 3. Hezekiah was one of the good kings of Judah. He made many reforms, of which we will read as we go on through his history. David was his father in the sense of being an important ancestor.

Verse 4. For comments on *groves* see 2 Ki. 17: 16. The brazen serpent had been made for one purpose only, to look at in case of the serpent's bite. It was never intended as an object of veneration, much less to be worshiped with the burning of incense. That made an idol out of an object that had

a divine origin, and the king destroyed it. People are doing a like thing with the cross. It was only the mechanical means to an end, and when that was accomplished it was not to be used as an object of veneration. Thus, when a cross is erected on a church building or grave stone, or is worn as a charm about one's person, it becomes an idol. The references to *the cross* of Christ in the N. T. mean the scenes of the cross, not the literal object of wood. *Nehustan* is from a word that Strong defines, "something made of copper." The idea is, the serpent had no inherent qualities to cure disease. Only when God was using it for the purpose could any benefit come from it. After that it was still the metal it was while in the earth, and not something that was entitled to be worshiped.

Verse 5. *None like him* is not the same as saying there was none as good or as great or as useful. Josiah was a great and good king and did wonders in the way of reform. But even at that, he was not *like* Hezekiah. It means he had individual characteristics in his service to God unlike those of any others.

Verses 6-8. A part of this is prospective, for we have not as yet read about his opposition to Assyria. *From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city* is explained at Ch. 17: 9.

Verses 9-12. This passage is the same as Ch. 17: 3-7. Its use in this place is to account for the actions of the Assyrians soon to be related. Their success against the 10 tribes encouraged them to try their fortunes against the 2 tribes.

Verse 13. Urged on by the success against the kingdom of Israel, the Assyrian king Sennacherib conducted an expedition against the kingdom of Judah. He took the fenced (walled) cities, among which was Lachish, where he pitched his camp.

Verse 14. *I have offended* could not mean an acknowledgement of any wrongdoing, for Hezekiah had not committed any. That is, he had not done wrong morally, nor gone beyond his rights as a king, although the original word could mean that sometimes. It is *CHATA* and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; properly to miss; hence (figuratively and generally) to sin; by influence to forfeit, lack, ex-plate, repent, (causatively) lead astray, condemn." From the connection, and with the definition for our author-

ity, the meaning is that Hezekiah admitted he was the loser. He had made a military miscalculation, and was ready to pay whatever the king of Assyria demanded. The amount set was 124,000 pounds of silver, and 174 pounds of gold, according to Moffatt.

Verses 15, 16. Part of this precious metal had been added to the building by Hezekiah, and now is used by him in remitting the fine imposed by the Assyrian king. It was a diplomatic move, and obtained a brief lull in disturbances from Sennacherib.

Verse 17. Some little time had elapsed since the events of the previous verse. The Assyrian king had maintained a post at Lachish, and from that place sent his officers to Jerusalem to demand the surrender of the city. In the meantime Hezekiah had formed an alliance with Egypt, according to the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia, which will be quoted: "But Sennacherib demanded more than this [the fine of silver and gold] from the Judean king. He had taken up his position at Lachish with the expectation of a battle against a most formidable enemy, Egypt, which had joined the league against Assyria, and whose army, although too late to protect most of its allies, was on the way to meet Sennacherib." — Article, *Sennacherib*. The *conduit* was a watercourse to bring water from a pool that Hezekiah had built for the service of the city; it is mentioned in Ch. 20: 20. The fuller's field was a place used to do various kinds of washing, which would be supplied by this conduit. This spot was chosen by Sennacherib's men because it was in speaking distance from the wall to Jerusalem.

Verse 18. Eliakim was a good man, and had charge of the king's household affairs. The two other men were part of the "office force" of the king. This trio came out to represent their master in the conversations.

Verses 19-21. Rabshakeh was the chief butler to the king, and was speaker for the group representing him in the conversation. *Staff of this bruised reed* was a figure, intended to describe the uselessness of the alliance with Egypt. This alliance was recorded and explained at V. 17. The substance of the speech was to the effect that Hezekiah was foolish to think he was strong enough to resist the great king of Assyria.

Verse 22. Rabshakeh make a false accusation against Hezekiah. The *high*

places and altars which he destroyed were not of God, but institutions opposed to God. History repeats itself, and today if a man opposes the religious institutions of men, he will be accused of opposing the work of God.

Verse 23. As an insulting statement, Rabshakeh offered to furnish Hezekiah some help if he cared to risk his fortunes in a battle. He offered to furnish 2000 horses, and then impudently intimated that he could not muster that many riders. And he also showed his contempt for Hezekiah by requiring pledges that due treatment would be given the horses while in the possession of the Jews.

Verse 24. Rabshakeh took it for granted that Hezekiah could not furnish that many riders. In that case, how could he hope to turn away or repulse even the weakest of Sennacherib's men, by trusting in Egypt?

Verse 25. It was known that the Lord sometimes used foreign nations to chastise his own people. He had recently done so against the 10 tribes. But the claim was false in this instance, for the expedition failed, and the Lord's plans do not fail.

Verse 26. Eliakim did not wish his Jewish brethren who were listening, to be discouraged by the threatening words of Rabshakeh. They knew that God did occasionally help foreigners against them, and perhaps this was one of those occasions. Eliakim believed he and his associates could endure the insults of Rabshakeh, but the others might not. For that reason he requested him to use his native tongue, since it could be understood by the three representing Hezekiah.

Verse 27. The language of Rabshakeh was vile in view of a more modern translation. But the meaning that he had was significant of a siege. It was a threat that if they did not surrender to Assyria, the siege would be prolonged until all rations would be cut off. In that state of want, they would be forced to eat and drink the discharges from their own bodies.

Verses 28, 29. In a spirit of spite, Rabshakeh took particular pains to have the men on the wall hear him. He used a loud voice and spoke in the Jews' language. He tried to instigate a rebellious attitude against their king. They were warned that Hezekiah would not be able to deliver them from the Assyrian king.

Verse 30. Rabshakeh knew the Jews

relied on the Lord for help, and he was rash enough to declare to these listening to him that their Lord would not deliver them.

Verses 31, 32. The next move of Rabshakeh was an offer of a bribe. If the people would desert to the king of Assyria, and come outside to him, they would immediately be supplied with the good things of life. That would continue throughout the siege, then they would be conducted kindly to the land of Assyria. That land would be as good as the one they were leaving, with an abundance of provisions.

Verses 33-35. As proof that no god can rescue a people from the hand of Assyria, Rabshakeh cited the captivity of the 10 tribes, that the gods whom they had served, and because of which the Assyrians had been brought against them, could not deliver them. He either did not know, or did not care to admit, that the God of the Hebrews was behind that action of the Assyrians, while he was not behind the present one.

Verse 36. Nothing the people could have said would have satisfied a vile character like Rabshakeh. Another thing, the king already had men deputized to speak for him, hence he had before instructed the unofficial people to attempt no speech.

Verse 37. Eliakim and his associates were much overcome by the tirade of Rabshakeh, and indicated it by rending their clothes, which was a custom in olden times when one was in grief or confusion. They reported their interview to their chief.

## 2 KINGS 19

Verse 1, 2. Hezekiah was much distressed by the report of his men. It was natural for him to go into the temple at such a time, for that was where the Lord's presence seemed to be the most vividly portrayed. He then decided to appeal to Isaiah the prophet for instruction and comfort. This is the first mention of this prophet, who was one of those who wrote as well as spoke prophecy. The prophets and priests were the public men employed by the Lord to communicate any special message to his people. (Heb. 1: 1). These representatives of Hezekiah arranged their appearance properly to indicate anxiety and distress, and went to the man of God.

Verse 3. This language is figurative, of course. A woman's time comes for

the birth of her child. Her labor pains are calling for relief, but she does not have the strength to expel the child without help. So the kingdom of the Lord's inheritance is in pain from trouble, but will have to have help to overcome it.

Verses 4, 5. Eliakim and his associates explained their figure of speech, and asked Isaiah to make his prayer to God on their behalf.

Verse 6. Isaiah did not claim any personal wisdom, but reported what God said. He also comforted them by assuring that they need not be afraid of the king of Assyria.

Verse 7. Isaiah specified his promise by saying the Lord would help them. The Assyrian king would be kept from attacking Jerusalem by a miraculous impression from God. Something will "rumor" to him that he would better look after his interests at home. In the meantime, however, he will be engaged in war with other forces. That will not keep him from his bitterness against Hezekiah, and even while busy with his affairs of war, will make more efforts to irritate him, which will be discussed below.

Verses 8. This meant that Rabshakeh returned to Sennacherib at Libnah, having learned that he had left Lachish.

Verse 9. There are four pronouns in this verse that might confuse the reader; *he*, *he*, *thee*, and *he*. The second refers to Tirhakah, the others to Sennacherib. When the Assyrian king heard that the Ethiopian king, Tirhakah, was coming against him, he was goaded into some more agitation against Hezekiah.

Verse 10. Sennacherib sent his messengers to Hezekiah to intimidate him into submission, with a possible alliance against the common foe. He warned him not to trust his God to protect the city of Jerusalem from capture.

Verses 11-13. Sennacherib tried the same boasting that his servant Rabshakeh had. He referred to the success of the Assyrian arms against the 10 tribes and other kingdoms, and that in spite of all the gods. He also made the mistake of likening a case where God was the real force, to one where the motive was against God. The messengers sent by Sennacherib were vested with a written communication, which they delivered to Hezekiah.

Verse 14. When the king of Judah

received the letter sent from Sennacherib, he did the same as when Rabshakeh made his defiant speech. He went into the house of God and spread the letter before the Lord.

Verses 15-19. *Dwellest between the cherubims*. This is a reference to the creatures Moses made for the mercy-seat over the ark. (Ex. 25:18-22). It was in the most holy place, and the high priest went there on one day of each year to converse with the Lord. *Open, Lord, thine eyes*. Strictly speaking, the Lord never closes his eyes. The word is from PAQACH and one definition is, "be observant." Hezekiah is reverently asking the Lord to take notice of them in their distress over the Assyrian king. The finest motive Hezekiah expressed for his prayer is, that all kingdoms may know that God is the only one. Such despots as Sennacherib had destroyed the gods of the nations they attacked. If he, in turn, is overcome by the God of Israel, then his supremacy over all other gods will be demonstrated.

Verse 20. Isaiah was an inspired man. God informed him of the prayer of Hezekiah and told him how to answer. He directed him to give answer in a message, for it says he *sent to Hezekiah*, which reminds us again of Heb. 1:1.

Verse 21. This is the beginning of the message Isaiah *sent to Hezekiah*, which will include a goodly number of verses. *Virgin* is from BETHUWLAH and Strong defines it, "feminine past part. of an unused root meaning to separate; a virgin (from her privacy); sometimes (by continuation) a bride; also (figuratively) a city or state." Daughter is from a word meaning any relation, either by blood or other tie. Jerusalem was separated to God, and the capital of the state composed of his people. *Him* and *thee* means Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and the man who has caused the condition of distress and threatening. *Despised* means to belittle the actual power of the enemy; *shaken her head* has the same significance. The past tense in *hath* is characteristic of inspired prophecy. With God, everything is an absolute "now," and he can speak of the future events as if they were already taking place, or even had done so. God knew what Sennacherib was planning on doing, and inspired Isaiah with information.

Verse 22. The prophet is represented as speaking to Sennacherib, and charg-



ing him with offense against God. Not speaking directly to him; but since God can read all minds, he is reading that of this boastful king. The making known of this state of Sennacherib's mind, and God's attitude toward it, is for the encouragement of Hezekiah and his people. The point is, that in using this attitude against Hezekiah and Jerusalem, it is accounted as against the *Holy One of Israel*.

Verse 23. The verse starts with the same thoughts described in the preceding one. The rest of the verse regards the boastful claims of the Assyrian king, how he proposed to occupy the choice places of the land within his siege.

Verse 24. *Strange* means "outside," and Sennacherib boasted (to himself) that he would use the waters of another land. Furthermore, he would stop the use of such waters that were not desired for his own use.

Verse 25. At this point God acts as if he would interrupt the boasts in the mind of Sennacherib, to remind him of certain facts. He asks the Assyrian king if he had not long known that "I have done it," meaning that the very things he threatened to destroy were the work of God. The last part of the verse means that God would be the one to consider when he thought about doing such havoc.

Verse 26. *Therefore* and the rest of the verse means that if Sennacherib carries out his boasts, to subdue the inhabitants in the way figuratively described, it will be in spite of the same God mentioned in the preceding verse.

Verse 27. From here on to the end of V. 34, (which by the way is the end of the message to Hezekiah), God is represented as speaking to Sennacherib about his boasting. We do not know that the king of Assyria ever actually saw this message; it was so worded for the encouragement of Hezekiah. God asserts that he knows all about the king and his raging against the people of the Lord's kingdom.

Verse 28. The original for *hook* is defined in the lexicon, "a ring for the nose (or lips)." *Bridle* is from a word that means to curb with a bit. The passage is a figurative description of the humiliating degree to which the proud Assyrian monarch would be brought, in his retreat to his own country.

Verse 29. Some specific proof of divine foresight is often given for the

benefit of God's people. While the passage is still represented as a warning to Sennacherib, its purpose is to encourage Israel. They are in siege and distress, and not free to go about their usual pursuits. Not that a material siege had been thrown around the city as yet. Sennacherib was away, engaged in war with other combatants. But the state of fear and uncertainty, caused by the overawing war clouds in the not too distant fields, had the effect of making the people hesitant and suspicious. They are assured that they may find subsistence from the voluntary fruits of the land for two years, after that they will feel free to engage in the cultivation of their land.

Verses 30, 31. It is so near, comparatively, to the captivity of the kingdom of Judah, that the prophet goes even beyond it to give a few words of encouragement to the people now in distress.

Verse 32. Returning to the subject immediately at hand, Isaiah declares that Sennacherib will not approach Jerusalem, not even near enough to shoot an arrow.

Verse 33. *By the way*, etc. If an army travels on a new highway, it might not be known whether the leader was still moving in his original plan. If he is on the same road on which he arrived at the given camp, but going in the opposite direction, it would be evidence of a retreat, which means defeat.

Verse 34. A double motive prompted God to defend Jerusalem. His own honor was involved, also that of the great king David.

Verse 35. Irreverent or frivolous critics think there is something to laugh at in this verse. If they were all dead, they ask, how could they arise? For one thing, the pronoun *they* occurs twice; once for the ones smitten, the other for the ones living. The word for *smote* is נָכַח, and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to strike (lightly or severely, literally or figuratively)." So a person could be smitten and not killed, and it would be proper information to add the ones smitten were dead. Another criticism is that the word *dead* is unnecessary, since the word *corpse* tells that. The critic again exposes his lack of information. At the time the A. V. was composed the word meant "a human or animal body, whether living or

dead," according to Webster. Hence, a corpse does not always mean one dead. Moffatt's translation gives us, "they were all found to be dead corpses in the morning." The R. V. words it, "and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead bodies."

Verse 36. The foregoing event was the *blast* predicted in V. 7. With such a stroke of misfortune to his army, Sennacherib was induced to give up all his malicious designs against Jerusalem, and return to Nineveh, the capital of his kingdom. He never again attempted anything against Palestine, but history gives accounts of many important campaigns elsewhere.

Verse 37. About 20 years after his return from the attempt against Jerusalem, Sennacherib met a violent death, and that by assassination at the hands of his sons. This fulfilled another prediction made by Isaiah in V. 7. Secular history does not give us any information on this affair, as to the motive of the murder. But we know it was not thirst for power, for the murderers escaped to Armenia, otherwise called Ararat, and another brother took the throne.

## 2 KINGS 20

Verse 1. *Sick unto death* means he was sick enough to die, and would do so unless some miraculous intervention occurred. *Set thine house in order* means for him to arrange his household affairs as he wants them to be conducted after his death.

Verse 2. *Turned his face to the wall*. Hezekiah was seriously ill, and not able to leave his bed for a season of prayer. He wished to have the privacy of secret prayer, and could have it only by turning his face toward the wall.

Verse 3. *Walk in truth* means to walk according to the truth of God. *With a perfect heart* means with all the heart. The word *perfect* always takes the definition "complete." To do something with all the heart is the same as doing it with a perfect heart. Hezekiah offered a scriptural reason for expecting the favor of God. It was not that he was wiser or more necessary to God than other servants, but he had served God truly. That is the teaching of the whole Bible. God does not depend on human assistance in carrying out his plans, for he is the All-powerful One. But he is pleased

to have the faithful cooperation of his children.

Verse 4. *Court* is from a word that means "city." Isaiah had scarcely reached the center of the city when the Lord stopped him.

Verse 5. God sometimes spoke directly to his servants, but more often he did so through the prophets. (Heb. 1: 1). Hezekiah was called the *captain of my people* because he was the king of Judah. The specific promise was made that the recovery would come to a climax on the third day.

Verse 6. From this verse it seems that Hezekiah's sickness occurred in course of the disturbances from Assyria; the exact date is not clear. At any rate, God assured him of 15 years more of life, and of the full relief from the threatening of Assyria.

Verse 7. Strong defines the *boil* as an inflammatory ulcer. There are some medical qualities in figs, yet they alone would not cure a malignant infection. This is another instance where the Lord combined human and superhuman means in effecting a result. See comments at 2 Ki. 2: 8.

Verse 8. The preceding verse covers the three-day period, from the application of the figs to the recovery. That style of writing is common to the various instances in the Bible. This verse goes back to the first of the conversation to relate some details. Hezekiah was not the first person who desired and received some miraculous evidence that a prophecy would be fulfilled. One instance only will be cited, that of Gideon in Judges 6: 36-40.

Verse 9. The shadow was on an instrument made by king Ahaz, and used to indicate the time of day. It is rendered "dial" in the A. V., but the marginal reading is "degrees," which is correct. It is from MAALAH, and Strong defines it, "elevation, i. e. the act (literally a journey to a higher place, figuratively a superior station); specifically a climactic progress." It has been translated in the A. V. by stair, step, story and other words. The definition is simplified in Smith's Bible Dictionary which I quote: "Dial. An instrument for showing the time of day from the shadow of a style or gnomon on a graduated arc or surface;" rendered "steps" in A. V., Ex. 20: 26; 1 Ki. 10: 19, and "degrees" in 2 Ki. 20: 9, 10, 11; Isa. 38: 8, where, to give a consistent rendering we should read with the margin the "degrees" rather than the

"dial" of Ahaz. It is probable that the dial of Ahaz was really a series of steps or stairs, and that the shadow (perhaps of some column or obelisk on the top) fell on a greater or smaller number of them according as the sun was low or high. The terrace of a palace might easily be thus ornamented." Article, *Dial*. The reason the King James translators used "dial" was the use of the modern instrument which is actually a dial, and used for the same purpose as the steps of Ahaz. Hezekiah asked for a sign and Isaiah suggested one with the dial. For the shadow to go suddenly in either direction would require a miracle, yet the king was told to suggest which direction.

Verse 10. *Light thing* means "easy." Hezekiah used the word in a comparative sense, not that it would not be a miracle either way. For the shadow to go down would indicate the hastening onward of time. The going backward would be the retracing of time, which Hezekiah thought would be the greater miracle, and chose that evidence.

Verse 11. In answer to the prayer of Isaiah, the shadow went back 10 steps or degrees. There was no logical relation between the 10 degrees and the 15 years to be added to the life of Hezekiah. He had been promised that much more of life, and this movement of the shadow was miraculous assurance of its fulfillment.

Verse 12. The events of this verse occurred after the recovery of Hezekiah. 2 Chr. 32: 31 gives us the additional information that the king of Babylon sent to Hezekiah to inquire about the miracle of the shadow, of which he had heard. He also professed to congratulate him on his recovery. The *present* was a bid for diplomatic alliance. See comments at Gen. 32: 13 on the word. Consistent with the principle of the alliance, a request was made to see the building of God, with the treasures therein.

Verse 13. *Hearkened* means he granted the request of the ambassadors of the king of Babylon. He *shewed them all the house* means he shewed them all through the house. In other words, he held a sort of "open house" for them, so that they obtained information of the desirability of the place. Doubtless, Hezekiah had the best of intentions, but the king of Babylon turned the courtesy unto his own favor.

Verses 14, 15. Again the prophet Isaiah enters the scene, and is told of the visit of the men from Babylon. He is not hesitant nor evasive in his statement, for he is not conscious of having done anything wrong. At that time Babylon had not risen to the power it was destined to reach, and no intimation of the danger that might come from such a source could have been apparent to an uninspired man.

Verse 16. *Word of the Lord* shows the significance of the work of a prophet. As a man, Isaiah might not have been any wiser than others, but when speaking for God, it was the same as if spoken directly by the Lord. See Heb. 1: 1.

Verse 17. *The days come* is a prophecy, meaning the days will come. The immediate calamity of predicted things was the taking of the valuables that had been just shown to the men from Babylon.

Verse 18. However, a graver fate was coming to Hezekiah than the loss of his collected articles. His descendants were to be taken to the country from which these men had come, who just saw the precious things. They not only were to be taken away from their native land, but would be forced to serve as *eunuchs* in the palace. The word means primarily one not possessed of manhood, and thus a desirable person to be a servant about the bed-chambers. It came to be used with reference to the personal attendants of kings and queens and other dignitaries.

Verse 19. It is difficult to understand the frame of mind which Hezekiah exhibited. The cold idea that his sons, and not he, were to see the predicted misfortune, gave him comfort. The most reasonable commendation one can offer is that his flesh and blood was not as important in his estimation as the quietude of the kingdom.

Verse 20. The pool is mentioned in Ch. 18: 17 and Neh. 2: 14. See the comments at the former place. *Chronicles* is explained at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verse 21. *Slept with his fathers* is explained at 1 Ki. 2: 10.

## 2 KINGS 21

Verses 1, 2. See 1 Ki. 14: 21 on reason for mention of *mother*. Manasseh began to reign at the age of 12 years. We would hardly think of a lad at that age doing very many things on his own responsibility. It was the rule

for young kings to reign through the priest. (Ch. 12: 2). Manasseh's reign was 55 years long, and the account of his activities given here does not tell us at what year he began the evil works described.

Verse 3. The *high places* are described at 1 Ki. 3: 2. They were not as bad as some other institutions of those times, yet they were objectionable. King Hezekiah had destroyed them, but now his son rebuilt them. Baal was the supreme male false god of the people of Canaan, and altars raised for him were used for burnt sacrifices. It was the most prominent form of idolatrous worship, to offer sacrifices to Baal. For information concerning the *groves* see at 2 Ki. 17: 16. *Host of heaven* means the sun and other heavenly bodies, that were worshipped by idolaters.

Verse 4. The house of the Lord was in Jerusalem. So the objection was not that Manasseh built altars *in the house of the Lord*, for that would have been the proper place for them, had it been right to have them. The point is that he built altars in the place where the Lord said he would put *his name*. It was the substituting the altars for the name of God that was condemned.

Verse 5. These altars were for sacrifices to the sun and other heavenly bodies. The *two courts* were the *inner court* (1 Ki. 6: 36) and the *great court* (1 Ki. 7: 12) that Solomon had made.

Verse 6. *Pass through the fire* is explained at 2 Ki. 16: 3. *Observed times*. The second word is not in the original. The first is from ANAN, and Strong defines it, "to cloud over; figuratively to act covertly, i. e. practice magic." *Use enchantments* is similar to the preceding practice, but has special reference to pretended ability to make predictions. *Familiar spirits*. The first does not appear in the original as a separate word. The second is from a Hebrew word of somewhat indefinite meaning, but generally refers to persons claiming some superhuman knowledge. *Wizard* has practically the same meaning as *spirits* above. The practices of Manasseh provoked the Lord to anger, so that he threatened to bring shame upon him and his people.

Verse 7. The words *my name* form the central thought of this verse. See comments at V. 4. A *graven image* is one carved out by hand, in the form of the idolatrous *groves* already explained at Ch. 17: 16.

Verse 8. This is a statement of the Lord, which was begun in the preceding verse, beginning with the words, *said to David*. The Lord is repeating his promise to maintain his people in the land, but on condition they keep his commandments.

Verse 9. This is the writer of this history, making comments on the conduct of Manasseh and the people under him.

Verses 10, 11. Isaiah and other prophets of his day were inspired to give the warnings from God, over the corrupt practices of the people of Judah. The Amorites are referred to because they represented the most corrupt type of idolaters.

Verse 12. The form of language is present tense, but it is prophecy, for the things threatened did not come to pass for some years. *Tingle* means to "redden with shame" at the humiliating punishment that would be put upon them.

Verse 13. *Upside down* is merely an indifferent incident if one were only considering the manual act of drying a dish and then putting it on a table with the face downward. But in using it as an illustration, it means that as a dish turned upside down would be empty, so the Lord will empty Jerusalem of its people.

Verse 14. The inheritance means the people whom the Lord inherited from the fathers, and whom he had made into a nation. Because of their wickedness, they were threatened with desertion.

Verse 15. The sinfulness of the people dated from the time they left Egypt. The *fathers* is a term used variously; in the present connection it applies to the heads of the families in all of the tribes.

Verse 16. *Innocent blood* means the blood of persons who were righteous as far as bloodshed was concerned. If a man commits a crime that deserves capital punishment, the shedding of his blood is not innocent blood. (Gen. 9: 6). *Beside his sin* has reference to his leading the people into idolatry.

Verse 17. *Chronicles*. See 1 Ki. 14: 19. In addition to the chronicles mentioned above, see the account in the Bible in 2 Chr. 33: 11-19.

Verse 18. *Slept with his fathers* is commented upon at 1 Ki. 2: 10. Manasseh was not buried in the sepulchre of the other kings. The garden of Uzza



was a somewhat private burial place near the palace of the king.

Verse 20. Again it is stated the king did evil *in the sight of the Lord*. Regardless of how a thing may seem to man, the thing that counts is what the Lord thinks.

Verses 21, 22. Amon not only forsook the Lord, but took up the worship of idols. It is bad enough to become inactive as to the service one owes to the Master. Mere neglect will condemn in the end. (Heb. 2: 3). But to add the sin of false religion is still more grievous. Amon served the idols his father served. It was no more sin to serve those idols than any others. The point is the thought of his father's responsibility. By setting the example of heathen worship, he left a trail on which his descendants and others were encouraged to travel.

Verses 23, 24. This passage furnishes a concrete case, showing both kinds of bloodshed, guilty and innocent. Amon was an unrighteous man, yet he was the lawful king and the act of slaying him was murder, or the shedding of innocent blood. When the people slew the murderers of Amon it was lawful, for they were not shedding innocent blood. It was an act of lawful execution, and in harmony with Gen. 9: 6.

Verses 25, 26. *Chronicles* again calls for the comments at 1 Ki. 14: 19. The sepulchre where Amon was buried was called *his* because it had been that of his father, and he inherited it.

## 2 KINGS 22

Verse 1. The reign of Josiah is said to have begun when he was eight years old. This is to be understood in the same light as the reigns of Jehoash (Ch. 12: 2) and Manasseh (Ch. 21: 1, 2). The reign of Josiah was one of the good ones, and would include the years he was guided by the priest.

Verse 2. The kingdom of Judah had a few good kings, and some were better than others. Josiah was one of the best, and emphasis is put on his case by the wording of this verse. He did what was right *in the sight of the Lord* which was the prime motive of his life. Walked *in the way of David*, which means he imitated the ways of an outstanding man of God. *Turned not* is significant, because it is not enough to do the right thing part of the time only. It is desired that a servant of God continue doing the

right thing, which will not leave him any time or energy for "side trips" from the strait path of duty and righteousness.

Verse 3. Comparing 2 Chr. 34: 8, we learn the 18th year means that of his reign, and when he was 26 years old. Josiah was acting on his own responsibility, giving instructions to the priest, instead of taking them from him. *Scribe* is from CAPHAR and defined by Strong, "A primitive root; properly to score with a mark as a tally or record, i. e. (by implication) to inscribe, and also to enumerate; intensively to recount, i. e. celebrate." The primary meaning of the word is given in the lexicon's definition. It acquired various shades of meaning at different ages, depending on the particular time, and the class of service employed. In the case at hand it had the meaning of a king's personal secretary. He was sent to the house of God on a mission of inquiry on behalf of the king.

Verse 4. Money was taken in from the people by the priest. Some of it was voluntary as a gift to the treasury (Lk. 21: 1-4), and other amounts came in through the tithing system of the law. Josiah directed that an inventory be taken of the silver.

Verse 5. After the amount of silver had been noted, it was to be put into the hands of the overseers of the work. They were then to give it to the men doing the work being planned. *Breaches* is from BEDIQ and defined, "a gap or leak (in a building or a ship)." Any kind of a structure will need repairs from time to time, the temple of God not excepted. The money in the treasury of the Lord would very properly be used to repair the house of the Lord.

Verse 6. Different classes of workmen are named, which shows a systematic plan of work. Each man to be assigned to the particular task for which he is fitted, is in keeping not only with good human judgment, but with the principle of God's dealings with man.

Verse 7. *No reckoning* means they were not checked. Their record of honesty had been made and the reckoning was not necessary. However, we observe that the money had been in the hands of two classes of men, the priest and the foremen, before it was in those of the workmen. That would be sufficient safeguard against unintentional error. It would be also a protec-

tion for each party in case some discrepancy should be suggested. The whole arrangement points to Rom. 12: 17 and 2 Cor. 8: 18-21.

Verse 8. See the comments at Deut. 31: 24-26 regarding the location of this book. Had it been on the inside of the ark, which the sabbatarians claim was a more important place, it is doubtful whether the priest would have found it. Had he not found it, the great reformatory work of Josiah might not have been done. Hence, if any valid argument is to be based on the particular place where this "ceremonial" book was kept, it was more important than the decalogue, for it led to a great reformation. An imaginary difficulty may appear to the reader. The high priest was to enter the most holy place, where the ark and the book were originally placed, on one day only of each year; what business did he have in there at this time? But the text should be read more carefully, which says the book was found *in the house of the Lord*. That would not necessarily be in the most holy place. Many changes had taken place since Moses put this book in the side of the ark. The Philistines had the sacred place for a while, then it was in various other hands before it was taken by David and housed in a tent pitched specially for it. After his death, and Solomon had built the temple, with its many rooms and other details, the ark was finally put into the most holy place. It would be unreasonable to suppose that the book was kept in that particular spot all that time, especially when the statement of our own verse states only it was found *in the house of the Lord*. Another point to be considered is, they found the book while looking after the money, and we know the treasury was not in the most holy place, for it was approached at various times in the year and by different persons.

Verse 9. The scribe did his duty as secretary, and made the report about the money. For *gathered* the marginal reading has "melted." Lest the reader be confused it will be explained. The original word is NATHAK and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to flow forth (literally or figuratively); by implication to liquefy." The word hence could mean actually to melt, but it does not necessarily mean that. The idea here is, the money was made to flow freely into the hands of the proper persons.

Verses 10, 11. In modern times it might seem strange that a copy of the law of the Lord would cause so much surprise, or that the finding of it was noted as such an event. But all copies of such documents were made by hand and were very scarce. Among the other items of neglect chargeable against the kings of those years was their failure to observe Deut. 17: 18-20. Had that been done, they would have been spared the surprise that shocked Josiah.

Verse 12. The persons named were the religious and personal "cabinet" of the king. The revelation brought to him by the reading of the book made him fear that the Lord's wrath might be soon poured out on them.

Verse 13. The law of Moses was complete and needed no general interpretation. But all along the line of their experiences as a nation, the Israelites needed the services of prophets and other inspired persons, to give immediate instructions and warnings. (Heb. 1: 1). Josiah knew the law had been disobeyed, and now he wished to learn just what was about to happen and what to do about it.

Verse 14. In about all of God's systems for the use and benefit of humanity, the leaders and authoritative teachers have been men. The exceptions have been inspired women, which would qualify them to speak conclusively regardless of their sex. Huldah was a prophetess and was inspired. That was why the men of Josiah went to her when he told them to *enquire of the Lord*. Her husband had charge of the clothes worn by persons of prominence about the capital city. She dwelt in Jerusalem, in the *college*, which means "second" or subordinate. Being a wife, she did not occupy the first place in the capital city, but since she was a prophetess she occupied a place next. To her the men appealed, who had been sent by Josiah.

Verse 15. *Saith the Lord* proves that Huldah did not speak on her own knowledge or responsibility. What she was about to say would be the word of the Lord.

Verse 16. *Words of the book* means the things threatened in the book against the people if they committed idolatry.

Verse 17. The nation had been guilty of idolatry and the evils connected with it for centuries. God had endured it from time to time, and more than once had allowed his wrath to be

turned away by the pleas of the prophets. But his patience was exhausted at last, and now he determined to carry out the extreme penalty that had been threatened, which is the meaning of the words *shall not be quenched*. In connection with these words, which might seem to disagree with other places in the Bible, the reader is requested to read carefully the following comments: Some apparent contradictions may be understood by an acquaintance with all the facts and truths concerned. The nation was told, in very decided terms, that it must go into captivity. Such reformers as Josiah endeavored to correct the corruptions of the nation and made sufficient progress as to receive the commendations of God. Yet he and other reformers were told that nothing could be done now to prevent the captivity, since the nation had become so corrupt as a whole that nothing but captivity could cure it of its leading iniquity which was idolatry. Yet there are always individuals in any community who are not in harmony with the corruptions of the community as a whole and who try to avoid those corruptions. With reference to these individuals there are various exhortations to repentance or to continuing in righteousness as the case might be, with the promise that those who were righteous or who would become so would receive the personal blessing of God, even though they, as members of a community, must share in the national calamity. Such men as Daniel and his three companions; Ezra, Nehemiah and others were among those who were already righteous. Doubtless others heeded the exhortations to repentance and thus brought themselves under the blessing of God. Because of this they were saved the humiliation of serving idols in the land of their captors, while the nation as a whole was required to worship these idols, so that the apparent contradiction between the definite threat of captivity and the exhortation to repentance is to be understood by considering the difference between the nation as a whole, and certain individuals therein. The above comments should be considered in connection with the following passages: 2 Ki. 22: 17; 23; 26, 27; 2 Chr. 34: 25; Isa. 1: 6, 18; 55: 6, 7; Jer. 3: 1, 7: 16, 27; 8: 20; 11: 14; 13: 23; 14: 11, 12; 17: 1, 24-27; 18: 8; 22: 1-6; 35: 15, and others of similar character. Apply these comments in all places where an apparent discrep-

ancy occurs as to divine favor to some and disfavor to others.

Verses 18-20. Josiah furnishes a concrete instance of the comments on the preceding verse, even as he is mentioned in those remarks. It is probable that his earnest exhortations and practical reforms saved many individuals from personal loss of divine favor. If that was done, and they were living when the captivity came, they were protected from the corruption of idolatry in the land of Babylon. For Josiah to end his days in *peace* did not mean that he would not be slain in battle (for he was), but that he would be at peace with his God, in spite of the error in judgment.

## 2 KINGS 23

Verses 1, 2. The discovery of the book, and the revelation of conditions, caused a complete change in Josiah's work. The plans for repairing the material building of the Lord were dropped, and full attention was turned toward repairing the spiritual house. The king called for a gathering of all the people of Judah, with special mention of the elders (older and experienced, but unofficial men), and the priests and prophets. The priests were the immediate custodians of the worship of the sanctuary, the prophets were the men inspired for special interpretation of the law in emergencies. (Heb. 1: 1). Josiah read to this great assemblage the words in the book just found, that had caused such consternation and alarm.

Verse 3. *Made a covenant* does not mean that Josiah enacted a new law to take the place of the law of Moses. It was more in the nature of a personal promise or assurance that he would do what he could to enforce that law. The promise was made in the hearing of the people, and *all the people stood to the covenant*, which means they agreed to it, which made it their obligation also.

Verse 4. Priests of the *second order* means the common priests. All buildings of importance have doorkeepers to guard against the entrance of improper persons. Very logically, then, they would be included in this order of Josiah. *Vessels* means any apparatus, such as a utensil or implement, hence it here refers to anything that was used in connection with the worship of Baal. See comments at 2 Ki. 17: 16 on *grove*. Utensils made to use in connection with those images were

included in this destruction. *Ashes* is from *APHAR* and Strong defines it, "dust, (as powdered or gray); hence clay, earth, mud." When metal is burned it corrodes and can turn to dust, here called ashes. We may recall what Moses did to the golden calf recorded in Ex. 32: 20. It was ironically proper for Josiah to carry this dust to Bethel, for that was one of the places where the national practice of idolatry was first set up. (1 Ki. 12: 29).

Verse 5. *Put down* means he stopped the practices of the idolatrous priests. The mere burning of incense in *high places* might not have been so bad in itself (1 Ki. 3: 2), but when it was done by the idolatrous priests it was done for the wrong purpose. Baal was an imaginary intelligent god, the sun and other heavenly bodies were inanimate deities. The people of Judah had turned to the worship of all those false gods, and Josiah sought to overthrow the corruption.

Verse 6. The *grove* was an object made of metal, as explained at Ch. 17: 16. By burning it the corrosion would make it possible to grind it to powder. The dust was put on the graves, and the companion passage in 2 Chr. 34: 4 shows it was the graves of the idolaters. That was a sort of contempt for fake gods, showing them to be as dead as the persons who had worshipped them.

Verse 7. *Sodomites* is explained at 1 Ki. 14: 24. They were people who practiced the vile sin as a religious ceremony. *Hangings* means tents the women fabricated to shelter the *grove*, or idolatrous image.

Verse 8. *Defiled the high places* denotes that he desecrated them so they could not be used again. Joshua was a governor of a city in Judah, and he gave his name to a gate of Jerusalem, just as noted people will give something to a particular building and have a room named for them. At one side of this gate there were provisions made for idolatrous worship, and Josiah demolished them.

Verse 9. This verse shows the characteristics of many professed servants of God. They will spend most of their time in the things that interest them personally, but neglect the service to their Lord. Then if trouble comes, they want to claim the benefits of the church. These idolatrous priests would not go to the lawful altar in Jerusalem, yet they were impudent enough to partake of their share of the bread that

had been contributed by others to the service.

Verse 10. There was a noted valley near Jerusalem called after the children of one Hinnom. In that valley was a place called Topheth, and at that spot the most horrifying acts were committed in the name of religion. Parents took their infants there and offered them in burnt sacrifices to Molech, one of the imaginary gods. Josiah desecrated this place so that it could not be used thereafter for that purpose.

Verse 11. In those days of prevailing idolatry, various places and persons were singled out for some object of the wicked cult. In the suburbs, which was a borough of Jerusalem, a chamberlain or eunuch had a room for his personal occupancy. In this place the different kings of Judah had made artificial horses and placed them there in honor of the sun as a god. The mention of chariots in direct connection with the horses, which were burnt, indicates the horses were of metal.

Verse 12. *Upper chamber* is from one word, meaning some elevated room of some kind and belonging to Ahaz, one of the idolatrous kings. Being devoted to idolatry himself, he permitted the others to build altars for idol worship on the roof of this chamber. The *two courts* were the *inner court* (1 Ki. 6: 36) and the *great court* (1 Ki. 7: 12) that Solomon made. King Manasseh had made altars in these courts for the service of idols; Josiah burnt them and cast their dust into the brook. That manifested not only a contempt for the false worship, but consigned the material to a place from which it could not be recovered.

Verse 13. It should not be forgotten that the *high places* were comparatively indifferent as to being wrong (1 Ki. 3: 2), for they occasionally were used for service to God. Although not in strict regulation, the Lord gave them some tolerance when used for Him. But they came to be used most generally for idolatrous worship and had to be condemned. *Mount of corruption* was the Mount of Olives, and 1 Ki. 11: 7 tells us the corruption was placed there by Solomon. Various tribes of heathen had their own gods. Many of them were the imaginary or invisible type, and their particular deities had places erected for their worship. Since such practices were an abomination to God, they were called the *abomination of the Zidonians*, etc.



Josiah *defiled* or desecrated all these places and rendered them unfit for idol worship.

Verse 14. *Image* and *groves* were about the same in principle. The first were statues of the invisible gods, the second were metallic likenesses of their sacred trees. By filling their places with the bones of men, two objectives were attained. It indicated a condition of death, also it served as a standoff in view of the feeling men had toward human bones.

Verse 15. *High places* is mentioned three times in this verse, and it is said that Josiah burned them and crushed them to powder. That indicates they were made of metal, whereas we often think of them as being places of eminence, either by natural elevation or architectural work. The idea is that on these high places there were altars erected for idolatrous worship, and the altars were burned, likewise the *grove* which was the metal image of their sacred tree.

Verses 16-18. Before reading this passage, the student should read 1 Ki. 13: 31, 32. It is the place where these things were first referred to, in part. The respect that men had for human bones, and especially those of a prophet, was great, almost to the extent of superstition. The old lying prophet of Bethel knew this, and prepared to have his bones respected when the time predicted came, by ordering his body to be buried in the same sepulchre with that of the disobedient prophet. By that time the bones would be sufficiently decayed that it would not be realized there was more than one person's remains in the tomb. The inspired writer knew that the bones of both prophets were there and preserved together. Josiah knew only from the title, and the information the men of the city gave him, that there were any certain bones there at all. The motive for burning the bones in these sepulchres was because they were those of idol worshipers. By desecration of their bones, the great disapproval of Josiah was shown.

Verse 19. Every form of religion in every age had temples erected for its headquarters. In such buildings the devotees of the *high places* would assemble at times for some of their heathen practices. These were the houses Josiah destroyed.

Verse 20. Josiah found the idolatrous priests engaged in their services

at the altars and slew them. He further showed his abhorrence for the system by burning the bones of those who had been dead for some time.

Verse 21. Among the things which had been dropped from their observance was this great national feast. The Israelites had been so much interested in the worship of false gods, they had forgotten that of the true; such a state of affairs might be expected. It is the principle Jesus taught in Matt. 6: 24. If the illogical thing should be imagined, that idolatry is as good as the true worship, still no man can do justice to both. Either would take up all of his time and energy. That is why their idolatry caused the Israelites to neglect the passover; also the seventh year rest for the land, and many other ordinances.

Verses 22, 23. The specific items of the passover were set down by the law, so that no radical difference should have been possible between any of the observations. The comparison is not to the items observed, but to the interest manifested. In 2 Chr. 35: 18 the same instance is recorded, and it mentions the thought of who and how many of the nation attended. A similar expression is often used today when we speak of some particular meeting that had been largely attended, and where unusual interest was manifested. It might be heard said at such a time that "we had a great meeting today."

Verse 24. *Familiar spirits* and *wizards* were persons who used magic to take the attention of the people from the worship of the true God. Josiah put all of such evil workers away. He destroyed also the visible objects of false worship such as those made in honor of the imaginary gods, and the *images* supposed to be like celestial beings.

Verse 25. There had been some very good kings before Josiah who opposed the corruptions existing among these people, but none of them carried their reforms as far as he. There was nothing that was left undone through inattention, that was possible for him to do to purify the situation of the nation.

Verses 26, 27. The thing that was impossible for Josiah to accomplish was to prevent the captivity. The case had gone too far to be altered. This zealous king did what he could to remove the corruptions, and doubtless succeeded in bringing many individuals to repentance. In spite of all this,

however, the nation had to go. The reader should again read the long comments at Ch. 22: 17.

Verse 28. Once more a reference is made to notes on *Chronicles* at 1 Ki. 14: 19.

Verse 29. This is the sad part of Josiah's record. It is given in more detail in 2 Chr. 35: 20-23. The king of Egypt was not intending to attack Josiah, but had been instructed by the Lord to go against the Assyrians. We have previously known that God sometimes used one heathen nation to punish another. That was being done in this case, and Josiah seemed to doubt the words of the Egyptian king. His zeal took him too far and he lost his life.

Verse 30. Josiah was treated with great honor and taken back to his capital city for burial. The regular succession to the throne should have been taken by Eliakim, since he was the elder brother. For a reason not stated *the people* put the younger son on the throne. But he did not keep it long as we shall see.

Verses 31, 32. Jehoahaz should be regarded as a usurper since he had an elder brother who had not been disqualified. The reign was only 3 months long and he was taken from the throne.

Verse 33. Pharaoh-nechoh was the name of an Egyptian king. The line of rulers in that country for many centuries was called Pharaoh. Each had his personal name and this one was Nechoh. He it was who slew Josiah when he interfered with the expedition against the Assyrians. Since Jehoahaz obtained the throne in an unlawful manner, it was not surprising that the Lord accepted this act of the Pharaoh in dethroning him and placing on the throne the lawful ruler. At the same time Pharaoh put a fine of 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold on the land.

Verse 34. Eliakim was the elder brother of Jehoahaz, and the rightful ruler. He was put into his proper place but had his name changed to Jehoiakim. We have no information as to why the change was made. After Jehoahaz was dethroned he was taken into custody at Riblah. He was afterward taken to Egypt where he died. He had received the additional name of Shallum in the meantime. This information, and the prediction of his death in the land of his exile, may be seen in Jer. 22: 10-12.

Verse 35. Jehoiakim paid the fine mentioned in V. 33 to Pharaoh, and he obtained the money by taxing the people. *Exacted* is from NAGAS and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to drive (an animal, a workman, a doctor, an army); by implication to tax, harass, tyrannize." *Taxation* is from EREK and defined, "a pile, equipment, estimate."—Strong. Jehoiakim forced the people to give to the utmost that was possible, although he had to use severe measures to accomplish it.

Verses 36, 37. This passage is a general statement of the length and character of Jehoiakim's reign. The most noted event of his reign was the rebellion against the king of Babylon, which brought on the great 70-year captivity of the Jews. That will begin in the next chapter.

## 2 KINGS 24

Verse 1. *His days* means the days of Jehoiakim, who had been placed on the throne of Judah by Pharaoh-nechoh of Egypt. After having done that, Pharaoh disappeared from the scene, because the king of Babylon had taken most of the territory, and the Egyptian king was shut up in his own country. (V. 7). About the time Jehoiakim began to reign, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon came up and *Jehoiakim became his servant three years*. That means that the king of Judah acknowledged the king of Babylon as his superior and agreed to a national alliance. Jehoiakim continued in that state of dependency to Babylon for three years, *then . . . rebelled*. That set the stage for the beginning of the noted Babylonian captivity of 70 years; it was in the year 606 B. C. While this great captivity began then and continued till 536 B. C., it was carried out in three stages, recognized in the scriptures and in secular history as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd captivities. Unless these divisions of the historical epoch are recognized, some statements in other parts of the Bible will be confusing. For instance, in Ezk. 1: 2 we read the words, *Jehoiachin's captivity*. In Ch. 40: 1 of the same book we have the words, *our captivity*. We know there was only one captivity as a whole, so the various references to some specific captivity must be understood in the light of these divisions. The dates of the 2nd and 3rd will be stated at the proper places in this and the following chapter. Ch. 23: 36 states Jehoiakim reigned 11 years. Since the captivity

started at the end of his 3rd year, he continued to reign for 8 years. But while he occupied the throne of Judah in Jerusalem, he was subject to the Babylonian king through those years, and the great captivity is to be dated, therefore, from his 4th year.

Verse 2. Jehoiakim was permitted to sit on his throne in Jerusalem, but the several tribes of heathen people mentioned were suffered by the Lord to make inroads against the country, which began to weaken the kingdom.

Verse 3. Most of the kings of Judah were evil men, but Manasseh was an outstanding one for wickedness, which is the reason he is mentioned in connection with the national distress. *At the commandment of the Lord.* It might be somewhat confusing to think of these idolaters doing anything in order to obey the commandments of the Lord. While God did sometimes give direct instructions to the heathen to perform certain services (Ezra 1: 2), there is nothing to indicate these people were acting with the motive or knowledge that they were obeying the Lord. The word *commandment* is from פֶּקֶד, and a part of the definition is "according to." The thought of the passage is, the action of the people mentioned was according to the will of the Lord. Men and even beasts can fulfill the will of the Lord without knowing it. (Isa. 43: 20).

Verse 4. Manasseh committed many sins not specified, but the shedding of innocent blood was one of the most horrible sins. So while the captivity did not come until the days of Jehoiakim, the wickedness of one of his predecessors was known to him, and he did not profit by it, therefore was the one on whom the blow came.

Verses 5, 6. *Chronicles* is explained by my comments at 1 Ki. 14: 19. *Slept with his fathers* is explained at 1 Ki. 2: 10.

Verse 7. The facts of this verse were commented upon at V. 1.

Verses 8, 9. The reign of Jehoiachin was only three months in duration. It was so short and so little was accomplished that it is ignored in the statements that pertained to dates of the captivities. Any date based on "Jehoiachin's captivity" would coincide with any that was reckoned from Jehoiakim's death. See my notes on *mother's name* at 1 Ki. 14: 21.

Verse 10. What is to be known as the 2nd captivity is recorded in verses

10-16, and readers who are marking their Bibles should make the notation accordingly. But the several verses will be considered somewhat separately. The verse of this paragraph begins the 2nd of the three captivities explained at V. 1, and the date is 598 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon, and it was he who had subjugated Jehoiakim for 8 years. Now that Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, was on the throne and was a very weak ruler, the king of Babylon decided to increase the servitude of the kingdom of Judah. He came with his servants to Jerusalem for the purpose of subduing it still more than it had been in the days of Jehoiakim.

Verse 11. Kings and other great men are said to have done things when it may mean only that their servants did them. But according to secular history and other evidences, Nebuchadnezzar was present in person at the siege of Jerusalem, although he operated by the aid of his servants.

Verse 12. This verse means that Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar without a struggle, and that he delivered into his hand his chief men. *Eighth year of his reign* means the 8th year of the reign of the king of Babylon. *Officers* is correctly rendered "eunuchs" in the margin of the Bible, for it is so defined in the lexicon. Eunuchs were employed much by kings and other men of prominence. They served as valets, also in other specific positions about the residence.

Verse 13. These precious articles that Nebuchadnezzar took are the ones mentioned in Dan. 1: 2; 5: 2, 3. *Vessels* is not confined to containers as we think of the word, but includes any article used in the service of a place. It takes in the ornaments of the holy building as well as the instruments for serving food and drink. That explains how the king could *cut in pieces* the vessels, yet Belshazzar could use them for his wine the night of the great feast. This circumstance fulfilled the prediction Isaiah made to Hezekiah in Ch. 20: 17.

Verse 14. *All Jerusalem* means the inhabitants of the city in general. The inspired writer then specifies some of the classes of persons taken. A *craftsman* is a fabricator and a *smith* is a "fastener." In other words, the craftsman fabricates things and a smith puts them together. *Valour* means "strength" of any kind. As used in this place it means the men with great force and influence. The *poorest sort*

would not mean only those of limited means, but included all classes with little or no important talents, and thus of limited usefulness.

Verses 15, 16. There is not much new information in this passage except what pertains to Jehoiachin in person. He and his attendants and his mother were taken to Babylon. He was kept in prison in Babylon for 37 years, then released and treated with royal courtesy by the king of Babylon then reigning. (Jer. 52: 31-34).

Verse 17. Jehoiachin had sons (1 Chr. 3: 17), but Nebuchadnezzar did not permit any one of them to occupy his father's throne in Jerusalem. Instead, he took one of his uncles, Mattaniah, and put him on the throne. At the same time he changed his name to Zedekiah, for no reason that is stated to us, and he will be known from now on by that name. He will be the last king that the Jews as a political nation will ever have. Having reached the last king of the Israelite nation, I will suggest a chart the reader can make which will be helpful in the study of the history. We have already had our attention called to the zigzag way the account has been given since the tribes divided into what were called the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Take the kings of Judah for a basis of the chart, starting at 975 B. C. Draw the chart on a schedule that will allot the proper space for each reign, according to the years stated in the books of Kings. Then under the line thus made for this kingdom, place the names of the kings of Israel in their proper position under the line of the kings of Judah. This will form a chart for reference while reading the history of the divided kingdom, and may be considered in connection with the comments I made at 1 Ki. 12: 17.

Verses 18, 19. It is stated that Zedekiah reigned in Jerusalem, and yet we know that the Babylonian captivity was going on at the same time. We must understand the last three kings to sit on the throne in Jerusalem were doing so as tributaries to Babylon, and were regarded as being subject to that country, just as surely as were the citizens who had been taken into it. Their permission to occupy the throne was a kind of courtesy, and was to be enjoyed on condition of loyalty to Babylon. They were so restless and wavering, however, that the king of Babylon finally lost patience with them and completely demolished

the government, taking entire charge of the country. This part of the history will be given in the next chapter.

Verse 20. This verse means that God's anger was held back until he finally turned his people over completely to Babylon. The captivity of the nation as a whole had been going on since the 3rd year of Jehoiakim. But Zedekiah could have prolonged the time when he personally must go, had he done right in the sight of the Lord, and respected the authority of the king of Babylon. His rebellion displeased God, and he suffered the king of Babylon to lay siege and finally complete the whole captivity, which will be learned in the next chapter.

## 2 KINGS 25

Verse 1. *Ninth year of his reign* means the reign of Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar became tired of the rebellious conduct of Zedekiah and determined to complete the subjugation of Judah by taking its king off his throne, and destroying the city. To do this he saw the need for an effective siege, and prepared to attack the walls. As a means to that end he built forts around it, which is defined in the lexicon, "a battering-tower." — Strong. That consisted in a series of the towers, practically comprising a wall all round about, from which the besiegers could apply their battering rams against the wall of the city to overthrow it.

Verse 2. The siege lasted 2 years, coming to a close the 11th year of Zedekiah, which will prove to be his last.

Verse 3. *Fourth* is not in the original in this passage, but is at Jer. 39: 2, where the same event is recorded. The famine prevailed on the above date, which means it had grown so bad that it reached a climax. The result was that the people in the city ceased to resist or try to hold the city against the besiegers.

Verse 4. See the author's comments on the garden wall as a means of escape at Ch. 9: 27. The inhabitants having relaxed their vigilance, the wall was attacked with greater fury and a breach was made through it. The soldiers escaped through the breach, the king with them, and they chose the night for their flight; this had been predicted in Ezk. 12: 12. *Chaldees* or Chaldeans is another name for the Babylonians at the time of our present study. In ancient periods there was a distinct group that had the



name Chaldees, and the term was not applied to any others. They finally settled in the city of Babylon and grew in power until they dominated, not only the city but most of the surrounding country of Babylonia. For this reason the name Chaldeans and Babylonians came to be used commonly for the same people.

Verse 5. King Zedekiah made the mistake that multitudes of others have made. It had been predicted that the city would be taken and that by the will of God. Moreover, it was plainly taught that resistance to the enemy would be in vain. Had Zedekiah heeded all these warnings and surrendered to the king of Babylon he would have fared better. Trying to run from him was the same as running from God, since the actions of the Babylonians was the carrying out of the plans ordained of God.

Verses 6, 7. While Nebuchadnezzar doubtless spent some time near Jerusalem in person, most of it was at Riblah, a temporary headquarters used by him and other monarchs of the East. Smith's Bible Dictionary has this to say of the place: "Riblah in the land of Hamath, a place on the great road between Palestine and Babylonia, at which the kings of Babylonia were accustomed to remain while directing the operations of their armies in Palestine and Phoenicia. Here Nebuchadnezzar waited while the sieges of Jerusalem and Tyre were being conducted by his lieutenants." This explains why Zedekiah was taken to Riblah after his capture. He was brought before Nebuchadnezzar, whose throne of judgment during the war operations was at Riblah, and there tried and condemned, which is the meaning of the words *gave judgment upon him*. His sons were then slain in his sight, after which his eyes were put out, and he was bound and taken, blinded, to Babylon where he died. This simple and consistent narrative explains what some enemies of the Bible claim to be contradictions, because not all of the facts are stated in each place. When studying this subject, the reader should always read the following passages. Jer. 32: 4; 34: 3; Ezk. 12: 13.

Verse 8. About a month after the events of the foregoing paragraph, Nebuchadnezzar sent his chief military leader, Nebuzaradan, from Riblah to complete the overthrow of Jerusalem and bring the Jewish nation completely under his power.

Verse 9, 10. Most of this chapter has to do with the 3rd captivity, otherwise known as the 3rd division of the great captivity. Since it is well to have clearly defined limits for certain important dates, those marking their Bibles should title this paragraph, the 3rd captivity, B. C. 587. As a brief résumé, I will state some of the outstanding things that took place at each of the three captivities. At the 1st, Jehoiakim was weakened by having several tribes of heathen attack his country. At the 2nd, the best of the citizens were taken to Babylon, including the prophet Ezekiel. At the 3rd, the buildings were demolished and the walls of the city broken down. This was when "the city was smitten" in the words of Ezk. 40: 1. The last king of Judah having been taken to Babylon, and now the city being completely destroyed, the great Babylonian Captivity was complete, although its beginning should be dated at 606 B. C., when Jehoiakim was put under forced tribute by Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 11. When an enemy attacks a community, there are often some who will betray their people and go over to the invaders. That happened in Jerusalem when the king of Babylon came against it. But it did not do them any good, for they were taken out of their native land to the land of their captor. At the same time, about all of the citizens that had been left in the city were taken off to the foreign land.

Verse 12. These *poor* of the land is explained at Ch. 24: 14.

Verses 13, 14. In Ch. 24: 13, mention is made of the more valuable vessels and ornaments that the king of Babylon took away. The things named in this paragraph were those of brass. They were very necessary to the temple service, but not as desirable from a commercial standpoint. In the 2nd captivity the king of Babylon did not bother with these materials, but since he was making a "clean sweep" of things in the final attack, he took possession of about all that could be turned to his account.

Verse 15. In the general ransacking of the place, Nebuchadnezzar's men found that some gold and silver had been left from the previous raid, and all of it was taken merely as precious metal, not because of the form in which it was found. That is what is meant by the words, *such things as were gold, in gold, etc.*

Verse 16. The *two pillars* are mentioned in 1 Ki. 7: 15, also in V. 13 in this chapter. But the subject is again brought up to tell us something of the great amount of "loot" the king of Babylon obtained. The *sea* was a great tank containing water for the various services about the temple. *Without weight* does not mean they were light, but they were so large and many and heavy that they had never been weighed. (1 Ki. 7: 47).

Verse 17. A chapter was a sort of ornamental cap or head piece on the pillars. *Wreathen work and pomegranates* refers to the ornamental formations in the metal.

Verse 18. *Chief priest* means the high priest, and *second priest* means the common priest who was acting at the time. All of the lineal descendants of Aaron were eligible for the priesthood, but their services were not always needed. Therefore, when a specified man is mentioned as being a priest, it means he was the one in active service.

Verse 19. When a revolution takes place in a government, men of prominence are often destroyed as a protective measure against possible future revolt. If such men were influential in the former government, they might some day exert enough control over the emotions of the people to rebel against the new government. So we read that Nebuchadnezzar's leading military man took charge of a great number of such persons who had been in the service of Zedekiah.

Verse 20. Nebuchadnezzar was still at Riblah, therefore these "key" prisoners were taken to him there for judgment.

Verse 21. *Smote . . . slew*. The first word means merely to strike, but not necessarily hard enough to kill. The second is added to tell us the result of the stroke. This verse is the concluding statement that the captivity had become a reality in full.

Verse 22. There could have been various reasons why Nebuchadnezzar wished to leave a small group of people in the land. We learned in V. 12 one of them was that they might care for certain crops. But since the country had been taken over by a foreign power, the people left needed some supervision, and for that service Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah with headquarters at Mizpah. He also left some of his own Chaldeans as a guard,

and the whole setup was to care for the land subject to the king of Babylon. This arrangement pleased the Jews who were scattered in various places in fear, and they came out from their hiding to Mizpah to enjoy the privileges permitted them under Gedaliah.

Verses 23-25. Jealousy is a terrible sentiment, and will lead men to commit great crimes. It appears here that the people who came to Mizpah were favorable to Gedaliah and that they appreciated his suggestions. But we have additional information in Jer. 4: 7-16; 41: 1-3. Gedaliah was warned of the treachery of Ishmael by Johanan but would not believe the accusation. He and several others were murdered, including the Chaldeans whom the king of Babylon had left to guard the place.

Verse 26. This verse is very brief, and omits many details that would shed information on the reason they fled to Egypt for fear of the Chaldees. It appears that Johanan became panicky after the affair of Ishmael, fearing even for the lives of all the rest, lest the sympathizers of Babylon attack them. He advised their flight to Egypt in spite of the instructions of Jeremiah the prophet, and even took some of the people by force (including Jeremiah) and fled to Egypt. The student is urged to read Jer. 42 and 43 to complete the information on this tragic episode.

Verses 27-30. This paragraph passes over about 26 years to pick up a few incidents concerning Jehoiachin. He had been taken from his throne in Jerusalem after reigning only 3 months, and taken to Babylon. After 37 years in prison he was released by the king then on the throne in Babylon, and treated with royal attention. *Set his throne* does not mean that Jehoiachin was permitted to act as a king. It means that he was treated with more courtesy and distinction than any of the other kings in captivity. In Jer. 22: 26 it was predicted that Jehoiachin (there called Coniah) would die in Babylon; our present paragraph fulfills that prediction. If he was treated in Babylon in the manner described *all the days of his life*, he necessarily died there.

## 1 CHRONICLES I

General remarks: A few comments were made on the subject of *Chronicles* at 1 Ki. 14: 19. Having come to this part of the Bible, I believe it will be