

**A Description  
of the  
BOOK  
From  
HEAVEN**

**Condensed Edition**

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Searcy, Arkansas

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## Preface

There are sixty-six books in the Bible, thirty-nine in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New Testament. It was written by about forty men, beginning thirty-five hundred years ago. The last book was written near the end of the first century AD. Some of the authors are unknown, but all of them were guided by the Holy Spirit of God. That means God is the ultimate author of the Bible. Indeed, there are many places, especially in the New Testament, where the authors speak of the scriptures as the word of God. Therefore, the Bible is truly the book from heaven. The men God used to write its words were all Hebrews (the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), for they were God's chosen people.

The first book of the Old Testament is called Genesis. It tells about the beginning of the world, and about the patriarchs of the Hebrew people. The next four books contain the law of Moses. They also tell about the creation of the nation of Israel. Moses was the author of the first five books. They are called the Pentateuch, meaning five. Jews call them the Torah, meaning law. The Israelites were later called Jews when only the tribe of Judah survived conquest. The next twelve books contain roughly a thousand years of historical information about the Israelites, down to the fourth century BC. The next five books contain writings of wisdom and psalms. The remaining Old Testament books are primarily prophecy.

The first four books of the New Testament tell about the life of Christ. The fifth book is about the early history of his church. The next twenty-one books contain information about the teachings of Christ and instructions for Christians. The last one is a book of prophecy.

The Bible contains over 783,000 words. This brief description of it contains about 123,000 words. That represents less than sixteen percent of the Bible. Nevertheless, I tried to include all of the major events and topics. Of course, I had to condense much of what it says, and only give the gist. Also I omitted much of the detail, such as long lists of names, as well as some lesser events. Of necessity I had to make many judgments about what to exclude. Therefore, you must keep in mind that this is just a simple description of what is in the Bible. Yet it will give you a good acquaintance with it. And once you become acquainted, I hope you will want to know more about that greatest of all books—the Holy Bible.

You may also want to read the full edition of my description of the Bible. It contains about 345,000 words, which is three times as many as this description. That represents forty-four percent of the Bible. If we can compare the Bible to the body of a man, then this condensed edition would be like seeing a line drawing of him. While the full edition would be more like seeing his photograph. Of course, no description can replace the real thing. Therefore, you should eventually graduate to studying the Bible itself.

I strongly recommend using a dictionary for words you do not recognize or are uncertain about. When I was young and foolish I belittled the importance of a good vocabulary. Yet I have learned that the smartest people work hard to learn new words. Words are tools for the mind to build wisdom and intelligence. Therefore, if you want to be smart, work hard to learn new words. And one of the best ways is to refer to a dictionary while reading serious books. Develop that good habit and it will bless you all your life. Your mind will grow stronger.

Nevertheless, if you think that might be too distracting initially then you might want to read first as an overview. After which you could go back and study the material more carefully with the aid of a dictionary and a Bible. But regardless of how you choose to learn about the Holy Bible, you can be sure the more you gain knowledge and understanding of it, the greater will be the positive affect upon your soul.

Finally, a word of warning about modern English translations. Most of them (including the popular NIV) distort the original text of the Bible with many changes. The authors of those translations use the so-called “dynamic equivalent” method, which is simply a flattering euphemism for loose translating. The only thing dynamic about the method is to aggressively corrupt the original text with their opinions instead of faithful translation. The authors of them make many guesses about what the scriptures mean, then they choose words to make it easy to read. Such versions are very popular because they have chosen the wide path, which Jesus condemned when he said, **“Enter ye in by the narrow gate, because wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many are they who enter through it. How narrow is the gate, and restricted the way, that leads to life, and few are those who find it”** (Matthew. 7:13-14).

Those kinds of versions vary in how loosely they translate, but none of them are trustworthy. They are all corrupted, more or less,

with many instances of interpretation instead of translation. Among the greatest offenders are the “easy-to-read” style versions. Consider just one example of how loosely they translate. Below are translations of Romans 7:9 from three legitimate versions:

**For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died** (King James Version).

**I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died** (New King James Version).

**I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died** (New American Standard Version).

Here is how the *Living Bible* translates that passage: “That is why I felt fine so long as I did not understand what the law really demanded. But when I learned the truth, I realized that I had broken the law and was a sinner, doomed to die.” Can you not see how different it reads? It is not what the Bible says, it is what the author thinks it means.

It is wrong to paraphrase the holy scriptures or reword them to make the text seem modern and always easy to read. It perverts and debases the message. Perhaps the most guilty of that are the Bible story books for children. Simplified descriptions of the Bible for children can be useful, but they should never be called Bibles. Moreover, no publication should contain pictures of Bible characters, because all such things are deceitful. If you want something for children, try *Selected Scriptures from the Holy Bible: Readings for the Young*, compiled by Genelle Porter. You can also learn more about many of the issues related to translating the Bible from my article *Preserving the Word of God* at my website. The internet address is [www.stillvoices.org](http://www.stillvoices.org).

**“Now to the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, alone wise, to God is honor and glory into the ages of the ages. Truly”** (1st Timothy 1:17).

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NOTE: The scriptures I quote are from the ACV (A Conservative Version), unless otherwise stated. Also I use gender relevant words in their historic meaning.

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# A Description of **THE OLD TESTAMENT**

beginning with  
**Genesis**

**“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”**

Dear reader, the world did not just happen. Nothing happens without a cause, except God. He alone had no cause because he has always existed. That is a great mystery, but the world is filled with great mysteries. God wrote the Bible so we could understand some of the mysteries about him and about ourselves, and to know that he loves us.

God is a supernatural being, and he lives in a different world. It is a world that is vastly superior to ours. We cannot even imagine how wonderful it is. It is called heaven because it is far above us. Ours is a world with many troubles and sorrows and evil things. But there are no troubles or sorrows or evil things in heaven. And if we trust him and live the way he wants, after we die he will take our spirit there, and will give us a new body to live with him for eternity.

The Bible says the earth was first covered with water. It was also dark, so God brightened it up with light. Then he made the air and the clouds in the sky. And he moved some of the water out of the way so there would be land. After that he made all of the grass and trees and plants. Then he made the lights in the sky that we call the sun and moon and stars. That way we can have a lot of light in the sky during the day, and a little light in the sky during the night. The first light must have been a special kind. Next God made all the animals that swim in the water, and fly in the air, and move on the land. And he gave them plants for food. So at the beginning they did not eat each other.

Finally, God said, **“Let us create man in our image”** (Genesis 1:26). Therefore, God made people. And now we know what God looks like, because he made us to look like him. Of course, he is much more beautiful and wonderful than we are. If you go to heaven when you die you will be able to see him.

It only took God six days to make the world because he is so powerful. God can do fantastic things very quickly. His Son Jesus could heal people in an instant. However, creating this whole world

was a very big job. So it took him six days. Then he rested on the seventh day. He rested because making this huge world took a lot of work.

When God made people he said we should have babies to bring new people into the world. That is the job of women. He also said we should work to improve the world and make it a better place. That is the job of men. What God created was very good, but it was not finished. He wants us to help him keep improving the world to make it better. You see, we are his children. And because we are his children, we should act like him. We should keep making and improving things. And remember, if we live the way he wants, when we die he will take us to heaven to be with him.

The first man that God made was Adam. And he made a beautiful garden for him to live in. It was called the garden of Eden. It was filled with good fruit that Adam could eat. There was only one fruit that Adam was not supposed to eat. That was the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God warned Adam that if he ate of it he would die. Adam's job was to take care of the garden. However, God also wanted him to have a helper. None of the animals were good enough. So he took a rib out of Adam, and created the first woman from it. Adam was very happy to have her.

Everything was wonderful in the garden of Eden. God even walked in the garden with them. However, the evil serpent came into the garden to see Adam's wife. And he lied to her. He tempted her to eat of the fruit that God said not to eat. He said if she ate it she would not die, but would be like God. So she ate, and gave some to Adam too. They both sinned against God who made them, and who was so good to them.

Therefore, God punished all three of them. He told the evil serpent he was condemned to go on his belly, and eat dust all his life. The Bible says the serpent was the devil (see Revelation 12:9). God told the woman she was going to suffer a lot of pain when she had children. And he told Adam that from now on he would have to fight against thorns and thistles for his food. And he would work with sweat on his face. He also told them they were both going to die, just as he had warned them.

The garden of Eden was such a wonderful place that Adam and Eve did not even wear anything. And they were so innocent of evil they were not ashamed to be naked. However, after they sinned, and gained knowledge of good and evil, they were ashamed of being

naked. Therefore, God made clothes of animal skins for them. Then he sent them away from the garden of Eden, and they could never come back. They would have to work hard to survive in the world until it was time for them to die. It was so sad. That is what listening to the devil does. He lies until it is too late, and we have to suffer for our sins.

Adam named his wife Eve. His first son was named Cain, and his second was named Abel. Abel took care of sheep, but Cain tilled the ground to grow crops. A time came when both of them made an offering to God. However, God only accepted Abel's offering because it was the kind God wanted. Instead of making the right kind, Cain became angry with God. God told Cain he would accept his offering too if it was the right kind.

But Cain was hateful and rebellious. So he went out and murdered his brother. When God asked Cain where his brother was, Cain said, "**I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?**" (Genesis 4:9). God knew what Cain had done, so he punished him. He could no longer be able to grow the crops he loved, and he would have to wander around to survive.

People lived a long time in those days, over nine hundred years. The oldest man the Bible tells about was Methuselah. He lived for 969 years. But God gradually made our ages shorter, and now nobody can live more than 120 years. However, the Bible says that most people will die when they are about 70 or 80 years old.

After a while more and more people were born into the world. Yet they began to be more sinful. The Bible says, "**And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth**" (Genesis 6:5). Jehovah is God's name. Because men made themselves so bad, Jehovah was sorry he made them. Therefore, he decided to wash the earth clean with water.

However, there was one good man. His name was Noah. So God told him to build a big floating ship called an ark. That would save him and his family. He also told Noah to put a male and a female of each kind of animal in it. When everything was ready God brought a great flood. It covered the whole world. And all the birds and animals on the ground died except what was in the ark. Noah was in the ark about a whole year. He waited until the flood was over and the land was dry again. Then they all came out, and mankind began all over again.

God promised to never again destroy the world by a flood. And

he made the rainbow in the sky as a sign of that promise. So now every time we see a rainbow, we can remember God's promise. God also said this time that all the animals would be afraid of men. When God first made people he gave them plants for food. This time God said they could also eat animals.

Sometime after the flood men decided to work together and build a great tower of Babel. They wanted its top to be in the heavens. However, Jehovah did not want them to become so powerful so quickly. Men can be very cruel and evil, especially if they have too much power. Therefore, he went down and changed their language so they could not understand each other. That made them split up and go away to different lands. And now we have many different languages in the world. That still makes it hard for us to work together.

Sometime afterward Jehovah spoke to a man named Abram. He later named him Abraham. Jehovah wanted to make him the father of a new race. God knew that most people in the world want to live sinfully. And he did not want the whole world to become wicked like it was before the flood. Therefore, he was going to have a special people he would use to preserve righteousness in the world. They would keep the world from becoming completely wicked again.

Abram was a very good man, so God chose him to start this special people. Those people were first called Hebrews. Later they were called Israelites. But now they are called Christians. I am one, and we are the spiritual descendants of Abraham. He is our spiritual forefather, because we believe and obey God like he did.

Jehovah told Abram to go to the land of Canaan, because that was where his nation was going to be. Abram trusted God, and so he went. Abram made his living by raising livestock. His nephew Lot decided to go with him. However, their flocks and herds became too large for them to stay together. Therefore, Lot went to live where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were. He went there because it was good land for his animals.

Later Jehovah appeared again to Abram. Abram still did not have any children. So he asked God how he could be the father of a great nation if he did not even have a son. However, God promised him a son. Then in a dream he told him about the future of his people. He said they were first going to be slaves in a foreign country four hundred years. However, God was going to punish that coun-

try. And he would set his people free to go to the promised land.

Sarai was Abram's wife. When she saw that she was not having a baby, she was sorry. She loved Abram so much that she gave her handmaid to him. Her handmaid's name was Hagar. Sarai hoped that Hagar could give him a son. Abram agreed with the idea, and so Ishmael was born.

However, that did not work, because God said Ishmael was not going to be the one to make his nation. Besides, Hagar began to hate Sarai. Hagar must have thought she was better than Sarai because she could have babies and Sarai could not. And that caused trouble, because she was Sarai's servant. We can see why God did not want her to be the mother of his special people. The Arabs say that Ishmael is the father of their race.

Later God appeared again to Abram. And he promised again that his race would become a great nation. This time God changed his name to Abraham. He also changed his wife's name to Sarah. And he gave Abraham the rite of circumcision. Jehovah said, "**... it shall be a sign of a covenant between me and you**" (Genesis 17:11). From that time on, every male in the household of Abraham and his offspring was to be circumcised.

Then Jehovah said that within a year Sarah would have a baby son. When Abraham heard that, he fell on his face and laughed. He laughed because he was ninety-nine years old, and Sarah was ninety years old. Later when Sarah heard that she was going to have a baby she laughed too. However, as soon as God left, Abraham circumcised all the men of his house.

When God appeared to Abraham next, he told him he was going to examine Sodom and Gomorrah. The men of those cities were acting very wickedly. Therefore, he sent two of his agents to see what they were like. God was going to destroy them if they proved to be so bad.

However, Abraham asked Jehovah not to destroy the good men with the bad ones. He asked God if he would save the cities for the sake of fifty good men. God said he would. So Abraham asked him if he would save them for the sake of forty-five good men. And God said he would. Abraham asked him if he would save them for the sake of forty, then thirty, then twenty. And each time God said he would. Finally, Abraham asked him if he would save them for the sake of ten good men. And God said he would. You see how patient God is?

When the agents of God came to Sodom, Lot wanted them to stay with him. He did not know who they were, but Lot was a good and kind man. During the night all the men of Sodom surrounded his house and asked Lot to give them the two agents. They wanted to molest them homosexually. Lot went out and asked them not to act so wickedly. When they were about to attack Lot, the two agents brought him back into the house. Then they made the men of Sodom blind that night to keep them from hurting Lot. That was proof enough how bad those men were.

So the two agents of God took Lot with his wife and two daughters. And they brought them out of the city early the next morning. Before they left them, they warned Lot and his family not to look back. But Lot's wife looked back, and she turned into a pillar of salt. When Abraham arose that morning he saw smoke rising up like the smoke of a furnace. It was from the fire and brimstone that Jehovah rained down from the sky to destroy the cities.

Later, just as God had promised them, Sarah bore Abraham a baby boy. Abraham named him Isaac. When Isaac was growing up Ishmael began to persecute him. So Hagar and Ishmael were sent away, but they got lost on their journey. God was kind to Hagar too. Therefore, he had one of his agents speak to her out of heaven to help her.

After that God tested Abraham. God commanded Abraham to take Isaac to a mountain, and use him as a burnt offering. Nobody knows exactly how old Isaac was when it happened. It was probably before he was a grown man. People used to kill animals and burn them as a way to worship God. Only evil men burned people that way. Yet God told Abraham to do that to Isaac. God can do anything he wants, because he made everything.

That must have been very hard for Abraham. He had waited so many years for a son. And now he was very old. Yet God told him to kill his son for a burnt offering. Could you think of a harder test for Abraham? However, Abraham had learned to trust God. He trusted him so much that he quickly began the journey.

It took three days for him to get there. Then he took his son up on the mountain, and raised his knife to kill him. Abraham's eyes must have been filled with tears. He loved Isaac very much, but he loved God more. God loved Abraham and Isaac too. So before he could hurt Isaac, the agent of Jehovah called to him out of heaven. He told Abraham to stop. It had been a test. Abraham did not know

it was a test until it was all over. He really thought he had to kill Isaac. The Bible later says Abraham thought God would bring Isaac back to life.

Do you think it was cruel for God to command Abraham to do that? Never think that way about God. Remember, he stopped Abraham before he could hurt Isaac. Did you know that God has a son too? His name is Jesus. And because God loves us so much he sent him here from heaven to help us. God even let evil men kill his son while he was here helping us. God had to do that so we could be saved. So you see how much God loves us? If you keep studying, you will understand better. Then you will want to love God more, because he is so good. Only the most evil and wicked souls, like the devil, hate God. He is better to us than the best father and mother anyone could ever have.

Abraham passed the test, and proved that he trusted God completely. Therefore, God blessed him, and he became the forefather of the Hebrew people and the Israelite nation. They are the ones who wrote the Bible. And Jesus our Savior was an Israelite. Abraham is an example for us to see how faith in God is always best. God will never again tell a man to kill his son for a sacrifice. When you find it hard to always live right, then think of Abraham, and try to trust God like he did. If you do then you can live in heaven with him some day. And maybe God will even make you famous too.

One day Sarah died, and so Abraham buried her in the cave of Machpelah. He bought it from one of the men of that land. After that Abraham sent his chief servant to the land where his kinfolds were. His job was to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham did not want him to marry one of the women of Canaan. They were not good people. Abraham's servant took with him ten camels, some other men, and many treasures.

After he arrived at his destination, he prayed that God would show him who to bring back for Isaac. He said if a young woman offered him a drink of water, and gave some to his camels also, that would show she was the one. And the young woman who did that was Rebekah. She was even the daughter of another nephew of Abraham.

Abraham's servant gave Rebekah some jewelry. Then he went and told her family what his mission was. He also told them about his prayer. So the next day Rebekah agreed to go with him to be

Isaac's wife. And after giving her and some of those in her family many gifts, he took her back with him.

Sometime later Abraham died. He was 175 years old when he died. Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah with Sarah his wife. Isaac's wife Rebekah could not have children for almost twenty years after they were married. Finally, God answered Isaac's prayers for her, and she was expecting. Instead of one baby, however, she had twins. The one who was born first was Esau, and the second was Jacob. Esau was an outdoorsman who loved to hunt, but Jacob preferred staying in the tents. The Bible says that Isaac loved Esau most, but Rebekah loved Jacob most.

One day when Esau was very tired from being out in the field he asked his brother Jacob for some of his pottage to eat. Jacob asked him if he would sell his birthright for it. Esau said he would. The birthright was given to the firstborn son. He was supposed to get twice as much inheritance. So you see, Esau was very foolish. All he wanted to do was eat. He did not care about his birthright, but later he was very sorry he sold it.

When Isaac became old he was unable to see clearly. And he did not know how much longer he was going to live. Therefore, he told Esau to go out and prepare some venison for him. Isaac loved the venison that Esau cooked for him. Isaac wanted to bless him before he died. Isaac's blessing was a very special thing. Somehow God gave him power to give a blessing for the future, but it could only be for one person.

When Rebekah heard what he told Esau, she decided to trick Isaac. She persuaded Jacob to pretend that he was Esau. It was a sinful thing to do. Yet the trick worked, and Isaac blessed Jacob instead. Jacob got the blessing, but he too was often deceived later in his life. And those deceptions made him suffer. God always finds a way to recompense us for our sins.

When Esau came back to his father they both learned what had happened. Esau was so angry that he planned to kill Jacob as soon as their father died. When Rebekah heard about that she was afraid. So she asked Isaac to send Jacob back to her brother Laban. She said he could find a good wife there too. She was hoping that Esau would cool off before he came back.

On the way Jehovah appeared to Jacob in a dream, and said he would bless him. When Jacob arrived at his destination he came to a well and met Rachel there. She was the beautiful daughter of

Rebekah's brother Laban. He helped her and some others water their flocks. Then he went to meet Laban, and he lived with him for a month.

Then Laban offered to hire him. And since Jacob loved Rachel, he said he would work seven years for her. However, after the seven years, Laban tricked Jacob. Without knowing it Jacob married Rachel's older sister Leah, who had "weak eyes." Weak eyes may have meant she was not very smart. Jacob did not discover he had been tricked until the next morning.

Laban made Jacob work another seven years to marry Rachel. Laban had deceive Jacob, and cheated him of the woman he wanted. I believe God let it happen because Jacob had deceived his father Isaac and cheated his brother Esau. God has ways to repay both our good and our bad deeds. Laban let Jacob have Rachel after the marriage week with Leah. Nevertheless, Jacob had to work fourteen years for his two wives. He only wanted one, but he was tricked just like he tricked his father.

Rachel and Leah both wanted Jacob's love. Consequently, they competed with each other. Jacob loved Rachel, but thought of Leah as inferior. God felt sorry for Leah, and so he gave her sons for Jacob. But Rachel could not have any. Rachel became desperate. So she took her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob to have children. That way Rachel could have sons. It is like women today who are paid to have children for someone else.

Later Leah stopped having babies. And when Leah saw that she was not having any more, she gave Jacob her handmaid. Finally, after Leah had born six sons and one daughter, God gave Rachel a son. She had a second son later. The Bible tells how Jacob eventually had twelve sons and one daughter from his four wives. The handmaids were considered second class wives.

When the fourteen years were over Jacob asked Laban if he could go back to his father. Laban saw what a great worker Jacob was. Therefore, he asked him to keep working for him. Jacob said he would. However, he said this time that he would not work for wages. He said he would work for profit sharing. Jacob said he would work for all of the livestock of a certain coloration. Laban thought that was a good idea. However, he cheated Jacob by rushing out and taking all of those animals before Jacob could get them.

Jacob did not fight about it. He just used his skill with livestock to raise big herds. God blessed him so much that his herds became

greater than Laban's. So Laban and his sons began to resent Jacob. Then Jehovah told Jacob to return to his homeland. By that time he had been with Laban for twenty years. Both Rachel and Leah agreed that Laban had not treated them fairly. So Jacob left secretly, but Laban went after him when he found out. When he caught up with him, they criticized each other, but finally separated in peace.

As Jacob came near to the land of Canaan he sent messengers to tell his brother Esau that he was coming. When the messengers came back they said Esau was coming with four hundred men. That made Jacob afraid. Remember, Jacob left his father and mother because Esau wanted to kill him. Therefore, Jacob took 580 animals from the big herds that he had. And he sent them as gifts for Esau, hoping that would persuade Esau not to attack him. He also divided his family into separate groups so that if one were attacked the others might escape. Then he spent the night in the camp alone.

Although Jacob planned to spend the night in the camp alone, the Bible says he wrestled with a man there. The man was an agent of God (see Hosea 12:4), and he changed his name to Israel and blessed him. There is a lot of mystery about the man Jacob wrestled with.

The next day when Esau met Jacob they hugged and kissed each other, and wept for joy. Esau did not want to take the animals from Jacob. He said he had plenty, but Jacob insisted. So they left each other in peace. Jacob went to Bethel where God first spoke to him in the dream. God appeared to him again, and changed his name to Israel.

Then after Jacob left Bethel, his wife Rachel died in childbirth. He named his new son Benjamin. She was buried at Bethlehem. Jacob went back to Isaac his father for a while. Then Isaac also died. Isaac had lived a hundred eighty years. Jacob's mother Rebekah must have died before he came back. So they never saw each other again after they deceived Isaac. God has ways to repay both the good and the bad that we do.

Joseph was the first son of Rachel. The Bible says that Israel loved Joseph more than all his brothers. And he made him a special coat of many colors. Joseph's brothers resented him. The Bible says, "**... they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him**" (Genesis 37:4). However, the Bible shows later that Joseph was worthy of being loved more than the others. Maybe he had already proven his worthiness to his father. For he would tell his

father about the evil things his brothers did. There is a difference between tattling and giving important information.

When Joseph was seventeen years old he had a couple of dreams. Those dreams seemed to predict he was going to rule over his father, mother, and brothers. When he told his brothers about the dreams, they hated him even more. Then a day came when Israel sent Joseph to where his brothers were feeding the flock. When they saw him coming they decided to kill him. They first threw him into a pit. Then they decided to sell him for twenty pieces of silver to a caravan of Ishmaelites. After that his brothers killed a goat, and dipped his coat in the blood. Then they gave it to his father. Jacob thought a wild beast had slain him. That was very sad news to Jacob. He mourned about his son for many days.

Joseph was purchased by an officer of Pharaoh in Egypt. The man was a captain of the guard in that land. Joseph was made a slave. However, the Bible says that Joseph **“was a man who succeeds”** (Genesis 39:2). He did so well that his master made him manager over his house. Joseph was also a handsome man. And his master’s wife wanted him to commit adultery with her. When he kept saying no, she got angry. Then she accused him to her husband of attempting to molest her. Therefore, he had Joseph thrown into prison. Joseph was in prison unfairly, but he continued to be a faithful worker. He was such a good worker that the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners.

Joseph’s freedom finally came a few years later. Two of Pharaoh’s officers had been cast into prison. They both had dreams that troubled them. So Joseph told them what the dreams meant. The butler was going to be released, but the baker was going to be hanged. Joseph asked the butler to help him be released, but he forgot Joseph.

Two years afterward Pharaoh had two dreams that nobody could interpret. The butler remembered how Joseph had interpreted his dream, so he told Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh called for Joseph, and asked him if he could interpret his dreams. Joseph said to him, **“It is not in me. God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace”** (Genesis 41:16). Joseph always honored God.

Pharaoh told him what was in the dreams. The first dream was about seven well-fed cows. They were followed by seven skinny ones. The skinny ones ate the fat ones, but they remained skinny. The second dream was about seven full ears on one stalk. They

were followed by a second stalk with seven thin ears. And the thin ears swallowed the full ears.

Joseph said that God had revealed the future to Pharaoh. God was going to bring seven years of great abundance. After them would be seven years of great famine. And the famine would be so bad it would consume all the abundance. Then Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint a wise ruler to prepare for the famine. Pharaoh and his servants were very impressed by Joseph. Therefore, Pharaoh made him that ruler.

So you see, Joseph finally could understand why all the terrible things had happened to him. They were part of a great plan God had to prepare him for greatness. That should be a lesson for us all. God wants to prepare us all for great things. However, he cannot unless we trust and obey him, even when we suffer wrongfully.

During the seven years of abundance **“Joseph laid up grain as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering, for it was without number”** (Genesis 41:49). Then came the seven years of famine. And all the other countries came to Egypt to buy grain. Jacob also sent his sons there because they needed grain for bread. However, he would not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin. He was afraid harm might come to him too. When they came to Egypt Joseph recognized them, but they did not recognize him. And he spoke to them by an interpreter.

Joseph decided to test them, to see what kind of men they now were. He accused them of being spies. And he asked them about their family. Then he said in order to prove they were not spies they had to go and bring their younger brother to him. And to make sure they came back he kept one of them, Simeon, in prison. When they heard those words, they said to each other, **“We are truly guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear. Therefore this distress has come upon us”** (Genesis 42:21). Their consciences were bothering them because of what they had done to Joseph.

However, when they came back to Jacob, he refused to let Benjamin go with them. He said **“Ye have bereaved me of my sons. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me”** (Genesis 42:36). Eventually they ate all of the grain they had bought in Egypt. So Jacob told his sons to go buy more. They told him they could not return to Egypt without bringing Benjamin with them. And Judah promised

his father they would bring him back safely. Finally, Israel relented and let Benjamin go with them.

When Joseph saw Benjamin he brought them all into his house to dine with him. After that he sent them all on their way with grain. However, he had his servant hide his silver cup in the bag of grain that Benjamin was carrying. After they had gone a short way, the servant caught up with them. He accused them of theft. When the cup was found in Benjamin's bag, they all went back to Egypt very sorrowful.

Joseph told them that only Benjamin would be imprisoned. The rest of them could return to the land of Canaan. Then Judah pleaded with Joseph. He told him about how their father felt toward Benjamin. Judah even offered to become a slave to him instead of Benjamin.

When Joseph heard that, he could not control himself any longer. You see, his brothers remained loyal to Benjamin even in danger. And they worried about their father. They showed Joseph they were not cruel and selfish anymore. Therefore, after ordering all of the Egyptians out, he revealed himself to his brothers. And he wept aloud for joy.

His brothers were so surprised they could not answer him. But Joseph reassured them. He said, **“I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life”** (Genesis 45:4-5). Joseph always gave God honor. And he proved that he was better than his brothers by the way he lived.

Joseph sent his brothers back to Jacob with wagons and other things. He wanted them all to come to Egypt. He warned them there were five more years of famine left. When they came back they told their father Israel that Joseph was still alive. They said he was ruler of all the land of Egypt. The Bible says when he heard that **“his heart fainted, for he did not believe them”** (Genesis 45:26). However, when he saw the wagons he decided to go with them. Then at Beersheba, on the way to Egypt, God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night. He encouraged him, and told him he would make of him a great nation in Egypt.

Jacob lived to be 147 years old then he died. Joseph took a very great caravan into the land of Canaan to bury his father in the cave of Machpelah. Joseph prophesied that God was going to bring the

Israelites back to their promised land. And he asked them to bring his bones with them. Then when Joseph was 110 years of age he died. And he was embalmed and put in a coffin in Egypt.

## A Description of **Exodus**

The sons of Israel multiplied greatly in Egypt. There were so many that the land was filled with them. Therefore, the Egyptians became afraid, and they made them slaves. Yet they kept multiplying. That caused the Egyptians to treat them even worse. They were very cruel to the people of Israel. The Egyptian king Pharaoh even made them drown all their baby boys in the river.

Moses was born when that was happening. The Bible says he was a pretty baby. So his mother hid him for three months because she did not want to kill him. She finally had to take him to the river, but she did not throw him in. She made a tiny little boat for him. Then she put it in the reeds of the river. When Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe she saw the little boat, and she told her handmaid to go get it.

When she saw the baby crying she felt sorry for him. So she decided to take him for herself. Moses' sister saw her, and she offered to find a woman to nurse him. Pharaoh's daughter thought that was a good idea. So she hired Moses' mother to nurse him for her. God not only saved little Moses, but he brought him back to his mother until he was old enough to live with Pharaoh's daughter. It was Pharaoh's daughter who named him Moses.

Moses grew up as a prince in the palace of Pharaoh. However, he knew that he was a Hebrew. When he was forty years old he decided to visit his people. He saw an Egyptian attacking one of the Hebrew slaves, and he defended the man. When he did the Egyptian died, so Pharaoh wanted to kill Moses. However, Moses escaped far away to the land of Midian, which was in Sinai.

When he came to that land he found a well, and helped some women there. They were the daughters of a man named Jethro. They were trying to get water for their father's flock, but shepherds were driving them away. Therefore, Moses defended them too. Moses was a good man, and he tried to help people who were being mistreated. After they returned to their father they told him what Moses had done for them. He made them go back and invite Moses to his house. Jethro was the priest of Midian, and Moses lived with

him forty years. He even married one of his daughters.

Then Jehovah decided it was time to free his people from slavery in Egypt. Therefore, he appeared to Moses on a mountain. God made a bush to burn continually. That made Moses curious, so he went to see what it was. When he came near the flaming bush God spoke to him from it. Jehovah told Moses to take off his shoes because the place was holy ground. Jehovah told him who he was. And he told Moses he wanted him to go back to Egypt to bring his people out.

When Moses asked God what his name was, he said, **“I AM WHO I AM. ... Thus shall thou say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you”** (Exodus 3:14). Moses did not want to go, and he kept making excuses. So God did some things to encourage him. One of them was to cause Moses’ rod to become a serpent, then back to a rod again. However, Moses said he could not talk well. Therefore, Jehovah sent his older brother Aaron to be his spokesman and assistant.

After Moses and Aaron came to Egypt they gathered all the elders of the sons of Israel together. Then Moses told them what God had said to him. The Bible says the people believed Moses, and they bowed their heads and worshiped. After that, Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh. He was probably not the same one who wanted to kill Moses forty years before.

They told Pharaoh that God wanted the sons of Israel to go into the wilderness to hold a feast to him. Pharaoh became angry, and he said no. Then he made the burdens of the people even greater. So the sons of Israel complained to Moses, and Moses complained to God. However, Jehovah promised Moses that he would free them from their slavery. And he said he would do it with a strong hand.

Jehovah first told Moses to show Pharaoh the miracle of his rod becoming a serpent. However, that did not impress Pharaoh. So he hardened his heart, and would not let them go. After that God began to send plagues against Egypt. He eventually sent ten plagues. Each time Moses warned Pharaoh beforehand about the plague, but Pharaoh always refused. Pharaoh ignored a few of the plagues. However, most of the time after a plague began Pharaoh would call for Moses. And he would plead with him to ask Jehovah to remove the plague. Nevertheless, after the plague was over he always hardened his heart again. Sometimes he would say part of them could go, but not all. None of the plagues hurt the sons of Israel.

The first nine plagues were these:

- Turning the river and all their water into blood.
- Bringing frogs everywhere.
- Bringing lice on all of the Egyptians.
- Bringing flies everywhere.
- Killing all their livestock.
- Causing boils to come on all the Egyptians.
- Causing hail and lightning to fall that killed everything outside.
- Bringing locusts everywhere.
- Causing deep darkness so the Egyptians could not move about.

Moses and Aaron warned Pharaoh about one more plague. At midnight God was going to slay the firstborn of every Egyptian, from the greatest to the least of them. He was even going to kill the firstborn of all the livestock they had gotten again. Yet not one person or animal of the sons of Israel would be harmed. They also told him that when it happened he really would let them go. However, Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

You see, it was God who was hardening Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh and the Egyptians had made the sons of Israel into slaves. And they treated them very cruelly, even killing many of their baby boys. They deserved all that punishment. It also showed them and the other nations how great and powerful Jehovah is. For the other nations heard about all the plagues. So God had a very good and just reason to harden Pharaoh's heart.

After that Jehovah told Moses and Aaron all the details of the Passover celebration. The Passover was a meal that the sons of Israel were commanded to prepare and eat that night. It had to be a lamb, and they had to put some of its blood on their door posts. It was called Jehovah's Passover, because he was going to "pass over" every Israelite household when he killed all of the firstborn.

He also commanded them to keep the ceremony every year to remember his salvation that night. And most of the sons of Israel still do to this day. However, Jesus Christ came later, and he is God's new Passover. So now Christians observe the Lord's Supper to remember his eternal salvation (see Luke 22:19-20).

At midnight Jehovah killed all of the firstborn of the Egyptians. The Bible says there was not one of their houses without someone dead. That caused a great cry of sorrow throughout the land. If you have ever had someone you love die in your house, then you can

know how they felt. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in the night, and he told them to go.

God had earlier commanded Moses to tell the sons of Israel to ask their Egyptian neighbors for “**jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment**” (Exodus 12:35). Therefore, when they left Egypt they received many treasures from the Egyptians. The Egyptians were full of sorrow and fear, so they gave the sons of Israel what they asked for.

God led his people out with a special cloud. The Bible says it was shaped like a pillar. At night it gave light like fire. After they left Egypt Jehovah commanded Moses to tell the people to camp by the sea. He was going to harden Pharaoh’s heart once again. He was going to cause him to chase them with his army. Then God was going to show the Egyptians once again that he is Jehovah.

When the sons of Israel saw the army coming, they cried out in fear. And they began to complain to Moses. Therefore, Jehovah commanded Moses to stretch out his rod over the sea to divide it. That way the sons of Israel could walk on the sea floor. After they had all crossed over, Pharaoh also went on the sea floor. However, God brought the waters back to cover up Pharaoh’s army. Hence, all the enemy soldiers were drowned. Then all the people sang and praised God because he saved them.

After they had gone three days in the wilderness they began to need water. When they finally came to a place which had waters, they discovered they were too bitter to drink. So they complained again to Moses. Jehovah told him to cast a tree into the waters to make them sweet.

After traveling a little further they again complained to Moses. This time they said they did not have enough to eat. The Bible says that God gave them “**bread from heaven**” (Exodus 16:4). It came with the morning dew. For when the dew dried up it left something that looked like frost on the ground. They could gather it, and then bake it or boil it for food. However, when the sun grew hot it melted away. Maybe it was like uncooked flakes of cereal. The Bible says it tasted like wafers with honey. It was called Manna, and it no longer exists. God only gave it to them while they were in the wilderness. The Bible also says that God gave them quails for food. Quails are like tiny chickens.

During that time Jehovah created the sabbath as a day of rest for them. On the seventh day of every week (Saturday) they were not

allowed to work. They could not even cook food; it had to be prepared the day before. Each one of them was supposed to stay in his place and rest on that day.

After traveling further the people again became thirsty. And they demanded that Moses give them water to drink. They complained against both him and against God. The Bible says, “... **they challenged Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us, or not?**” (Exodus 17:7). They were so mean to Moses the Bible says, “**Moses cried to Jehovah, saying, What shall I do to this people? They are almost ready to stone me**” (Exodus 17:4). Therefore, God commanded Moses to go ahead of the people to a place called Horeb. Horeb is the same as mount Sinai. He was to take some of the elders of Israel with him. Then he was to strike the rock there. And when he did water came out for them.

Two months after leaving Egypt the sons of Israel arrived at mount Sinai. Then Moses went up to God, who spoke to him on the mountain. Jehovah commanded him what to tell the sons of Israel. This is what God said for them: “**Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my own possession from among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation**” (Exodus 19:4-6).

God was making a covenant with them. He promised to make them his own special people, a holy nation, if they would obey him. A covenant is an agreement with someone. It is like a contract. An example is marriage, which is an agreement or contract between a man and a woman to be joined together in love. And God was making an agreement with the sons of Israel.

Moses spoke to the elders of the people what Jehovah told him. And the people said, “**All that Jehovah has spoken we will do**” (Exodus 19:8). They accepted his covenant. Then Moses went back and reported to God. This time Jehovah told him to sanctify the people for two days. They were supposed to wash their clothes, and prepare themselves. On the third day God was going to come down on the mountain for all the people to see. And Jehovah said that any man or animal that touched the mountain should be killed. Therefore, Moses went down from the mountain and told them.

The Bible says that on the morning of the third day “**there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and**

**the voice of an exceedingly loud trumpet. And all the people who were in the camp trembled”** (Exodus 19:16). It also says, **“... mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire, and the smoke of it ascended as the smoke of a furnace. And the whole mount quaked greatly”** (Exodus 19:18). God did that to show them again how powerful he is, and to strengthen their faith in him. When the mountain quaked God himself spoke to all the people from it. What he said to them were the ten commandments.

- The first commandment: Jehovah told them not to have any other gods. Jehovah is the one who freed them from slavery in Egypt.
- The second commandment: Jehovah told them not to make images of anything. Most people in those days worshiped images. They were like those Buddha idols and others that you can see in some countries today. God did not want them to be so foolish as to worship a piece of metal or wood or stone instead of him.
- The third commandment: Jehovah said they were not supposed to take his name in vain. That means they should never mention his name irreverently. Americans disobey that command a lot now. We often hear them saying “God” casually and disrespectfully. They do it when they stub their toe, or make mistakes, or see something surprising. They use his name as an expletive. However, God warned he would punish people who do that. So beware.
- The fourth commandment: Jehovah told them to keep the sabbath day. Jehovah made that command so that everybody in his nation would be able to rest one day each week. Did you know that the weekends people enjoy came from that command? God was the one who first gave people a regular day of rest each week. No other nation had it. And since most Christians worship God on Sunday they combined Saturday and Sunday to create the weekend. It was because of the Bible that so many people now have two days off from work each week.
- The fifth commandment: **“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God gives thee”** (Exodus 20:12). The apostle Paul said that commandment was the first one with promise. God promised we would live long if we honor our father and mother. Remember, however, it was a general rule and not a guarantee for every person, because nothing is guaranteed in this sinful world. The only

absolute guarantee is God's promise of eternal life for us in heaven.

- The sixth commandment: **“Thou shall not murder”** (Exodus 20:13).
- The seventh commandment: **“Thou shall not commit adultery”** (Exodus 20:14).
- The eighth commandment: **“Thou shall not steal”** (Exodus 20:15).
- The ninth commandment: **“Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor”** (Exodus 20:16). That means we should not lie to our friends and neighbors, or lie about them, to cause them harm.
- The tenth commandment: **“Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is thy neighbor's”** (Exodus 20:17). That means we are not supposed to want what our neighbors have. It is alright for us to want things similar, but not what our neighbors own.

God probably spoke the great ten commandments directly to the people from the mountain because they are so fundamental and important. Everyone ought to learn them and do them. The more people obey them, the better the world becomes. The only exception is the sabbath day. Jehovah said it was special for the sons of Israel (see Exodus 31:13). However, people have learned that the idea of a day off from work each week is a good one. The strongest nations do it.

Seeing the mountain, and hearing the voice of God was an awesome experience. In fact, when all the people saw the mountain and heard the voice, they were afraid. The people were so fearful they asked Moses to speak to them instead of God. They said they were afraid they would die.

After all that happened Moses came up the mountain in the thick darkness where Jehovah was. And Jehovah gave him more laws and commandments for the people. There were laws about servants, which said they should be treated kindly and fairly. There were laws about being attacked. God said punishment for an attack should be **“life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe”** (Exodus 21:23-25).

That means if a man took somebody else's life, then he should

lose his life. If a man ruined the eye of another man, then his eye should be ruined. Whatever injury a man did to someone else, is the same injury he should be punished with. Let's say someone deliberately hit you and broke your nose. His punishment would be to have his nose broken. That is being just, and God loves justice. It also discourages people from attacking others.

Part of the laws of Moses are about punishing people who steal or destroy property. Those laws were designed to protect the victim instead of the criminal. Whoever stole or destroyed property had to make up for it. In most cases the thief or destroyer had to give back four or five times as much as he ruined. Here is how a law like that would work today. Let's say someone stole a car and ruined it. He would have to give the owner four or five cars just as good. And if he did not have the money, he would have to get a loan to pay for them. And he would be forced to work until he could repay the loan with interest. If we had laws like that there would not be many thieves.

Those laws of Moses were to punish people who caused harm. However, what about people who may not like you, but they do not harm you? Maybe they just call you bad names, or refuse to be nice to you. What if someone like that fell and hurt himself? The law of Moses said you should help him anyway. What if he lost something, and you found it? The law of Moses said you should return it to him. Doing those things would help him be your friend and not your enemy. God loves us, and he wants us to love each other.

There were also laws to protect and care for people who are poor or weak. Indeed, there were many laws designed to make their country peaceful and clean and orderly. They were all designed to make life happier for them. God loves us, and he wants us to be blessed, but sin keeps interfering. Sin is the cause of all sorrow and suffering.

God also commanded the sons of Israel to keep a feast to him three times each year. All of the men were supposed to appear before Jehovah at a certain place. There was the feast of unleavened bread, which began each year after the Passover. There was the feast of harvest or weeks. That feast was also called Pentecost in the New Testament. And there was the feast of ingatherings. That was also called the feast of tabernacles or booths. That feast was the time when they were supposed to live for a week in huts or tents. It would help them remember how they lived in the wilderness after they left Egypt.

There are many other laws. You can read them all in the Bible. After giving those laws to Moses for the people, God said he was going to destroy all the nations in their promised land. He was going to destroy them because they were so wicked. And he warned the sons of Israel about them. He said, **“Thou shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works, but thou shall utterly overthrow them, and break their pillars in pieces”** (Exodus 23:24). God did not want the nation of his chosen people to tolerate any of those other religions, because they caused people to commit evil.

God told the people he was going to send hornets ahead of them to drive out those people. He said, **“I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. Little by little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land”** (Exodus 23:29:30).

And he warned them against making any treaties with them. He told them not even to let them live in the land. Those people were so evil that God had condemned them to be destroyed. They were like the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. Only this time God was not going to destroy with fire and brimstone from the sky, but by the army of the sons of Israel. The fire and brimstone obeyed God, but the sons of Israel did not. The Bible tells later how they failed to destroy all of those wicked people.

Then God commanded Moses to bring Aaron and his two eldest sons Nadab and Abihu up on the mountain. He also told him to bring seventy of the elders with them. He wanted them all to worship him at a distance. But only Moses could come near to him. Therefore, Moses went back to the people, and returned to Jehovah with the men he was told to bring.

When they got there, the Bible says, **“... they saw the God of Israel. And there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. And he laid not his hand upon the nobles of the sons of Israel. And they beheld God, and ate and drank”** (Exodus 24:10-11). No doubt he appeared to them in the form of an earthly man, and not in his heavenly glory.

Sometime later Jehovah again called for Moses to come up on the mount. This time God said that he was going to give him the tablets of stone on which he wrote the ten commandments. So

Moses went up onto the mount of God with Joshua his minister. He also told the elders to wait for them until they returned. When Moses went up this time, the Bible says he was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

This time Jehovah told Moses to collect a free-will offering from the people. He was going to have them make a sanctuary for him. And he listed all of the kinds of materials he wanted. It included certain kinds of wood, precious stones and metals, leather, cloth, oil and spices. He said to Moses, **“Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee: the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture of it, even so shall ye make it”** (Exodus 25:8-9).

Then the Bible records about seven pages (in a typical modern Bible) of detailed instructions that God gave about how to make it. It was to be a certain size and shape. The size and shape was about the same as the trailers we see behind the big trucks on our highways. However, it was to be a tent that could be taken down and carried.

The first thing Jehovah described was the ark of the covenant. That was basically a chest, although very beautiful. It was a place for the two tablets of stone which had the ten commandments written on them. It was to be about four feet long, and two and a half feet wide and high. It was to be overlaid entirely of gold, both inside and outside, with a crown of gold around it. Its cover was to be called the mercy-seat (also called the place of forgiveness). That was to be made of solid gold.

On top of the mercy-seat were to be two cherubim of solid hammered gold, one on each end. Regarding them, Jehovah said, **“And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy-seat”** (Exodus 25:20). Real cherubim are heavenly beings whose primary role appears to be guards.

Nobody knows exactly what the tabernacle or anything about it really looked like, including the golden cherubim. But one thing is clear about real cherubim: they do not look like women or small children. They seem to be awesome beings of great might. That would certainly make them fitting guards. Of course, what God told Moses to make was only a representation of them.

The sanctuary was to have two rooms. The room at the entrance

was called the holy place. The inner-most room was called the most holy place. The most holy place was to have the ark of the covenant with the tablets of stone in it. The holy place was to have a lamp-stand, an altar for perfume, and a table for bread. The walls and furniture were all to be covered with gold. The outermost covering over it was to be leather, the innermost one was to be linen. There was to be a curtain to separate the two rooms, and a curtain to cover the entrance.

There was also to be a courtyard around the tabernacle. Its wall was to be made of linen curtains. In the courtyard there was to be an altar for burnt offerings, and a large container to hold water for washing. God also told Moses exactly how to make special clothes for the priests. Finally, Jehovah gave Moses the two tablets of stone with the ten commandments on them. The Bible says they were written with the finger of God.

When Moses did not come down for a long time the people became impatient. They told Aaron to make gods for them. They must have thought that Moses was not coming back. Therefore, Aaron took all the golden earrings from their wives and children, and made an idol of a calf. Then the people began to worship the idol. They also held a feast, and danced and played.

When Jehovah saw what they had done, he told Moses to go down. He said the people had corrupted themselves. That means they made themselves be like trash. God was very disgusted with them. He said they were “**a stiff-necked people**” (Exodus 32:9). That means stubborn and hard to be with. He was so angry he threatened to destroy them, but Moses begged Jehovah not to do it. So God let them live.

When Moses went down and saw the calf and the dancing, he also became very angry. He threw the tablets down and broke them. Then he took the calf and melted it down. He ground the gold into powder and mixed it in water. Then he made the people drink the water, which meant the gold would end up in their toilets. They had made themselves shameful.

After Moses destroyed the calf, he spoke to the people. He said, “**Whoever is on Jehovah’s side, come to me**” (Exodus 32:26). The Bible says that all the sons of Levi came to him. Then he said that God commanded them to put on their swords and start killing people. So the sons of Levi killed three thousand men that day. The

sons of Israel had declared war against Jehovah when they made the calf, and so he fought against them.

Afterward, when Moses went back on the mount he asked Jehovah to forgive the people. God told Moses to lead them to the promised land. He would not kill them all, even though they deserved it. However, he would not be in the midst of them on their journey. Instead he was going to send a heavenly agent to be with them.

Jehovah told Moses to cut out two tablets of stone like the first. God would write the same words on them. Moses did, and went back up on the mount as God commanded him. Then Jehovah came down in the cloud to be with him. And he spoke to him again about his covenant with the sons of Israel. Moses spent another forty days and forty nights on the mountain.

When Moses came back down his face shone brightly because God had been speaking with him. Moses did not know that his face was shining. And so when all the sons of Israel saw him, they were afraid to come near him. However, Moses called Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation to him. Then he told them all the commandments that Jehovah had given him. However, because his face shone, Moses put on a veil when he was down with the people so he would not frighten them. However, he took it off when he went up to speak with Jehovah.

Moses told the people about the sanctuary, and the different kinds of material that Jehovah wanted for it. The sons of Israel were very generous in giving for the tabernacle. In fact the workmen soon told Moses to stop collecting because they had more than enough. Yet when it came to worshiping Jehovah alone, and keeping his commandments, they were almost always rebellious.

The rest of the book of Exodus describes how they built the tabernacle. They finished it about a year after they left Egypt. And when they did, the Bible says, **“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle”** (Exodus 40:34). The Bible says that whenever the cloud was taken up, the sons of Israel packed up and moved out. And the cloud led the way.

## A Description of **Leviticus**

Most of this book is about laws. Laws help people know what is right and wrong so they can live better. They also help promote justice and order. There is also a lot in this book about the Levites. God chose the sons of Levy to be the priests. The priests were men who worked for God. Aaron and his sons were the chief or high priests. The other men of the Levites were assistant priests. Disciples of Christ are now God's priests, and Christ is our high priest.

The first laws in Leviticus are about different kinds of offerings to God. Offerings were things that the people gave to God. Some of the things they gave were burnt on the altar. The altar was like a very big cooking grill. Most of the things they burnt on the altar were animals, the kind they ate for food. However, they never cooked anything on the altar; everything put on it was for God only. The Bible says their burnt offerings were "a sweet savor to Jehovah." That means it gave a pleasant aroma, like the smell of steaks cooking on a grill.

When the Bible says it was a burnt offering, that meant the whole animal was burnt. However, there were other offerings when only part of the animal was burnt. The rest of it could be eaten. However, the blood was always supposed to be poured out on the ground, and all the fat was burnt. They were forbidden to eat fat or blood.

Making burnt offerings was done a lot in Bible times. It was one way they worshiped God. Another reason was to make atonement to God for sin. Atonement means to make up for doing something wrong. For example, if someone offended you, he could offer you a gift to atone for it. And sometimes the sons of Israel had to make burnt offerings for atonement to God, so that he would forgive their sins.

The sons of Israel were supposed to bring their offerings to the priests. And the priests had to supervise everything. Whoever made the offering would first lay his hands on the head of the animal, then he would kill it. The priest would collect the blood. He sprinkled some of it on the altar, then he poured the rest on the ground. After that the priest would burn the animal, either all of it or part of it. There were various other rules, like what parts to wash, and what parts to burn.

There are also laws about meal offerings. Those are also called grain or cereal offerings, because they used crushed grain or flour. They were often combined with animal sacrifices. Most of a meal offering was given to the priests for food. Usually only a handful was burnt on the altar. The Bible tells a lot about different ways to prepare them. And it tells what ingredients to include and what to exclude.

Next the book of Leviticus tells about peace offerings. They were a form of worship. And they did not burn the whole animal. They saved some of the meat to eat. Whoever offered the peace offering would cook the meat they saved, usually by boiling. Then he would eat it in thanksgiving to God, or for some other reason. However, nobody but the chief priests could burn an offering on the altar. Remember, the altar was never used to cook food.

After those things rules are given about sin offerings. They were made for atonement of sins that were done unintentionally. Finally, there are rules about trespass (or guilt) offerings. Trespass offerings were like sin offerings, but they were for sins that required more compensation. That meant paying something to make up for what was done. They were to pay either the priests for God, or to whom-ever had been hurt by the sin.

Examples of sins requiring payment to the priests were these: (1) failing to testify as a witness when they should have, (2) touching the dead body of something unclean without knowing it, (3) making a vow, and then forgetting to keep it. The guilty man had to bring a lamb or a goat. If he could not afford one of those, then he was to offer two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. And if he could not afford those, he was to offer **“the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour”** (Leviticus 5:11), which was about the size of a gallon.

Examples of sins requiring payment to the victim were (1) robbery, (2) cheating in trade, (3) not returning something that was lost, and (4) swearing to a lie. To be forgiven they had to make full repayment for whatever the victim lost. And they had to add twenty percent more to it. After that they were to bring a trespass offering of a ram to the priest.

There were more rules about offerings. Fire was to be kept burning upon the altar continually. The priests were given most of the meal offerings. They were also given the meat of the sin offerings and the trespass offerings. The priest who offered the burnt offering was given the skin of the animal. (They could make leather out of

that.) The priest who supervised a peace offering was to be given part of the unleavened cakes and wafers that were required with it. And the breast and the right thigh of the animal was to be given to the priests. Also the worshiper had to eat the meat of his peace offering either on the same day of the offering or on the next day. And again Jehovah warned against eating fat or blood.

The next part of the book of Leviticus describes the dedication ceremony of the high priests, Aaron and his sons. They were washed, clothed with the special clothing, and anointed with oil and a little blood. There were also several animal sacrifices made. That was to sanctify both them and the congregation. The process lasted eight days, and it was very elaborate. At the end of the ceremony the Bible says, **“And the glory of Jehovah appeared to all the people. And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and consumed the burnt offering and the fat upon the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces”** (Leviticus 9:23-24).

Aaron’s two eldest sons were Nadab and Abihu. And they offered strange fire before Jehovah. When they did that, the Bible says, **“... there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah”** (Leviticus 10:3). Moses told Aaron that Jehovah said, **“I will be sanctified in those who come near me. And I will be glorified before all the people”** (Leviticus 10:4). Aaron must have been very sad when his sons died, but the Bible says he did not complain. He knew it was their own fault.

Right after that the Bible says Jehovah told Moses to tell Aaron not to drink any alcoholic beverage before he went into the tabernacle. Otherwise he would die. God said it was a law for every generation of priests. He said the reason was **“that ye may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, and that ye may teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah has spoken to them by Moses”** (Leviticus 10:8-11).

Drinking alcoholic beverages, like beer, wine, and whisky, keep a man from being alert and careful. No man should drink any of that if he has something important to do. It makes the mind slower and less effective. In America almost half of the car wrecks that kill people are caused by drunk drivers. Thousands of people are killed by them every year. If Americans had laws like the ones God gave Moses for the sons of Israel much less of that would happen. My

only brother was killed by a drunk driver.

Next the Bible lists the animals that the sons of Israel could eat and those they could not eat. The ones they were commanded not to eat were called unclean. Most of the unclean animals were ones we would not want to eat anyway, such as horses, rats, crocodiles, eagles. The most popular unclean animal that gentiles eat is the swine or pig. Bacon and ham come from pigs. They are very filthy animals, and more care must be taken to eat them safely. One animal that the sons of Israel could eat, which I would not want, was the locust. However, I have never tried to eat one.

After giving laws about food, Jehovah gave laws about what to do with a man who had a skin disease or an abnormal drainage from his body. Those kinds of things can infect other people. Therefore, it was the duty of the priests to determine who was unclean that way. Those who were declared unclean had to live outside the camp away from other people. The priests also examined clothing and houses that seemed to be infected with something. If those things could not be cleaned they were to be destroyed. God wanted both moral and physical cleanliness among his people. And he did not want anybody or anything that was unclean to infect others with their uncleanness.

God spoke to Moses often in the most holy place of the tabernacle. However, Moses was a very special man. And Jehovah did not want other men to come often in his inner sanctuary. He knew that some of them might be like Nadab and Abihu. Therefore, he gave a new commandment. He said that except for Moses, only the high priest could come into the most holy place. And the high priest could only come there one day a year. And that day was the day of atonement. Modern Jews call it Yom Kippur.

On the day of atonement the priests were supposed to do many things, including animal sacrifices. That was also the day when they sent the scapegoat out into the wilderness. The scapegoat was supposed to carry all the sins of the people away from them. It was a symbolic ritual. Also on the day of atonement all the people were supposed to fast, which means they were not supposed to eat that day. That was to show they were sorry for all their sins. They were punishing themselves by not eating.

God warned the sons of Israel about many things. He told them to make sacrifices only on the altar at the tabernacle. The reason was to keep them from sacrificing to other gods. And he warned

again against eating blood. Eating blood is still forbidden, even for Christians. Yet I have seen pictures of people eating blood in Africa. And the Germans have a popular food called blood pudding. Jehovah also warned the sons of Israel against some of the horrible things done in the pagan nations.

Then he told them some of the other things they were not allowed to do. The sons of Israel were not allowed to marry their mother, or a sister, or a granddaughter, or a daughter-in-law, or an aunt. They could marry more than one woman, but they could not marry both a woman and her sister or her daughter. There were other commands against perverse things that some people do.

Jehovah also commanded them not to use their children for burnt offerings. Anyone who did that was supposed to be killed. Sacrificing children for burnt offerings is a horrible thing. However, many Americans do something just as bad. About forty years ago our country decided to forsake God. Then our rulers began to allow people to kill their babies. And since that time tens of millions of innocent babies have been murdered. Many other countries also murder their children to get rid of them.

Jehovah warned his people about all of those things. He said doing them would make them dirty and polluted. He said the nations in their promised land did all those evil things. They had polluted themselves. Therefore, he was going to punish them by causing the land to vomit them out. That was why God told the sons of Israel to destroy them. And Jehovah did not want that to happen to the sons of Israel. Yet the history of the Israelites shows they did not listen to his warnings. They polluted themselves by doing evil dirty things. Therefore, God caused them to be vomited out too. And I fear for my own land, which is being filled with the same kind of evil dirty things.

Jehovah told the sons of Israel how to help people who are poor or weak. He did not want them to harvest their crops right up to their fences. They were supposed to leave what grew near their fences **“for the poor man and for the sojourner”** (Leviticus 19:10). In those days they did not have motels and restaurants for travelers. So if a man went on a journey he had to take a lot of things with him. And many men could not afford much. So Jehovah wanted the farmers to help the poor and the travelers by leaving some of their crops in the field.

For the same reason the farmers were not supposed to harvest a

field or a vineyard more than once each time. Whatever was left behind after the harvest was supposed to be for poor people and travelers. You see how kind God is? When he blesses the farmers with crops, he told them to share some of it with the needy. However, that was not a handout as our socialist government does, because the needy had to go out and harvest what was left of it for themselves.

Jehovah gave them many other laws so they would be kind toward each other. He said, **“Ye shall not steal, nor shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another”** (Leviticus 19:11). He told them not to be cruel, especially to those who are handicapped. He said, **“Thou shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but thou shall fear thy God. I am Jehovah”** (Leviticus 19:14). And he told them not to go around gossiping. He said, **“Thou shall not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people”** (Leviticus 19:16). Gossip is talking bad about someone behind his back. That is being hateful, and God wants us to love each other.

If they were offended in some way by another Israelite, Jehovah said to them, **“Thou shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of thy people, but thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. I am Jehovah”** (Leviticus 19:16). Jesus said to love thy neighbor as thyself was the second greatest commandment.

Jehovah told them not to take personal vengeance. Taking vengeance means getting even. And they were not to bear a grudge either. Instead they were to go and criticize the man personally. Jehovah said, **“Thou shall not hate thy brother in thy heart. Thou shall surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him”** (Leviticus 19:17). Jehovah wanted them to solve their disagreements together, not be resentful and go around saying bad things. That is what we should all do. However, what about a man who is stubborn? When you try to get along with him, he refuses. Then we should let God take over. He will find a way to punish such a man.

Nevertheless remember, Jehovah commanded authorities to enforce the laws. If a man steals something or injures someone else authorities must punish the criminal. And they must force him to make up for the harm he did. If authorities were faithful about that, there would be much less cause for resentment. But people do not

want to obey God, which explains why there is so much injustice in the world.

God was also concerned about the appearance of his people. He said, for example, **“Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, nor shall thou mar the corners of thy beard”** (Leviticus 19:27). What that seems to say is that God did not want them to have fancy beards or fancy hair cuts. Barbarians and circus clowns do such things. And Jehovah wanted his people to look civilized and dignified. Some Jewish men have misinterpreted that command. So they let their sideburns grow long and hang down. It certainly does not look dignified. It makes them look more like women.

God also commanded them not to put things like tattoos, body paint, or carvings on their skin. All such things are barbaric. God wanted his people to look civilized and dignified. I groan when I see how Americans are becoming less civilized.

God also told them not to listen to those of the occult, people like fortune tellers or psychics or astrologers. He said, **“Do not seek them out, to be defiled by them. I am Jehovah your God”** (Leviticus 19:31). Those people are liars who seek their own glory and profit. Instead, Jehovah told his people to fear God. He also told them to honor the elderly: **“Thou shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and thou shall fear thy God. I am Jehovah”** (Leviticus 19:32). A hoary head means having white or gray hair. Righteous elder people are wiser and more trustworthy than fortune tellers, psychics, and astrologers.

Those are some of the laws Jehovah gave for his people. They were all intended to make them wise, and kind, and just, and dignified, and loyal to each other. And God again warned the sons of Israel to obey his laws. He told them not to do what the people of Canaan were doing. Jehovah said those people did evil things. He said, **“... and therefore I abhorred them.”** (Leviticus 20:23). He wanted his people to be holy, and separated from the filthiness of the world.

After that Jehovah gave Moses commands about the priests, the sons of Aaron. Since they were to work for God, the rules for them were more strict. For example, they could not marry a harlot or a divorced woman. And no man could perform the duties of a priest who had any kind of blemish. A priest who was blemished could eat of the offerings, but he could not go in the tabernacle or come near the altar.

Next Jehovah spoke again of their special days. Those were times when the people were to remember God. There was the weekly sabbath day of rest. And there was the feast of the Passover. The day after that began the seven-day feast of unleavened bread. Later they were supposed to bring the offering of first-fruits of their harvest to the priest. Then after seven sabbaths (forty-nine days), on the fiftieth day they were to have another feast. It was called the feast of weeks. Remember, the New Testament calls it Pentecost (which means fifty). Then in the seventh month was the day of atonement. After that, in the same month, was the feast of tabernacles or booths. The sons of Israel were required to live in tents or huts for seven days. God said the purpose was **“that your generations may know that I made the sons of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God”** (Leviticus 23:43).

The sabbath was a day of rest each week. However, there was also a sabbath year. God said that every seventh year he wanted the land to rest. They were not supposed to plant any crops that year. And they were not supposed to sell any crops that grew. All they could harvest was what they could eat. Whatever grew in the fields was to be food for whoever wanted it, for both men and animals. For one thing that would help the soil remain healthy. It would also give them time from farming to build things, or do other useful things. Jehovah told them not to worry about having enough to eat. He promised them they would have plenty of food to store up if they would obey him.

Then after seven sabbath years, in the fiftieth year they were to have a jubilee. The jubilee was also a time to help the poor. Sometimes when people become poor, they have to sell their property. At the jubilee all men were supposed to get back the lands and houses they had sold. And if a man sold himself in a labor contract, he was to be freed.

God does not like men to become too poor or too rich. Therefore, the jubilee would help keep poor men from staying poor, and rich men from getting all the land. Not everything that a man sold was to be given back at the jubilee. Only their lands and their houses and their freedom. When a man of Israel sold himself it was like joining the army in America. He was committed for the time of the contract. Although in Israel a man could buy his freedom back. Nevertheless, at the jubilee he was freed of all obligation.

There were other laws especially for poor men. The sons of

Israel were supposed to treat a poor man kindly and help him in different ways. And Jehovah said they should never make slaves of an Israelite. Yet, like all of his laws, the sons of Israel eventually broke that one too.

Near the end of the book of Leviticus the Lord told Moses to tell his people about the blessing and the curse. Jehovah said if they kept his commandments their farming would yield bountifully, so much that they could store up large amounts of food. Also there would be peace in the land. And in any war they would greatly defeat their enemies. They would be a fruitful people and would multiply. They would be prosperous and successful because Jehovah said to them, **“I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people”** (Leviticus 26:12).

Then he told them about all of the curses that would happen to them if they were disobedience. Jehovah said he would afflict them with things like diseases, crop failures, and being defeated in war. Those things would not come all at once. He would punish them with a few things so they would repent. However, if they kept disobeying him, he would eventually destroy their cities. And he would scatter them among other nations. Yet Jehovah also promised he would not destroy them completely. And he never has.

### A Description of **Numbers**

After about a year at mount Sinai Jehovah told Moses to take a census. He wanted a count of all the men who were twenty years and older. They were to be soldiers for their armies. And he wanted Moses, Aaron, and a head-man from each of the twelve tribes to make the count. Therefore, they counted all those men in each of the tribes except for the Levites. The total number was 603,550. The Levites were not counted with them because they were responsible for the tabernacle. The tribes of Israel were called armies. And the way they camped and the way they traveled was to be organized like an army.

Since God had saved all of the firstborn at the Passover he said they belonged to him. God had originally planned to make the firstborn son of every Israelite a worker for him. They were going to be ministers who would help the priests in their work. They would be the assistant priests. It was a great honor.

However, because the people kept rebelling, then God changed

his mind. The Levites were chosen to be God's special servants instead. He made that change after the people made the golden calf. The Levites were the men who came to God's side. And they obeyed him when he told them to kill the worshipers of the idol. That is why God chose them to be assistant priests instead of all the firstborn sons of the people. You see how we lose God's blessings when we sin, and we gain them when we obey him?

Jehovah told Moses to number the males of the Levites who were from thirty to fifty years old. That was the age of service for the tent of meeting, the tabernacle. The number of the men who were qualified for the work was 8,580. The Levites were divided into divisions according to the three sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Jehovah also told him how Aaron and his sons were to wrap and prepare all the furnishings of the tabernacle when they traveled. The Kohathites were supposed to carry those things, but they were not allowed to see them. The sons of Gershon were supposed to carry the curtains and the coverings of the tabernacle. And the sons of Merari were supposed to carry all of its supporting framework.

After that, Jehovah told Moses to command the people to put out of the camp all who were unclean in a certain way. Jehovah also mentioned examples of things that were to be given to the priests for their work.

Then God gave his instructions about the vow of a Nazarite. A vow is a solemn promise. Not much is known about the vow of the Nazarite. It seems to have been a promise by someone to separate himself to God for a certain time. During that time he could drink no wine nor eat anything made of grapes. Also he could not cut his hair. It had to grow long. However, that did not mean to let his hair hang shaggily; lepers were supposed to do that. When the time of his separation was over, he was supposed to make several offerings at the altar. The last thing he had to do was shave his head, and burn the hair with a peace offering. Samson is the only man mentioned in the Bible who was a lifelong Nazarite.

After that the Bible says Moses set up the tabernacle. And he anointed and sanctified everything. Then the rulers of the tribes brought an offering of six wagons and twelve oxen. There was a wagon for every two rulers, and an ox for each ruler. Then Jehovah told Moses to give them to those Levites who were to carry the curtains and the support structure of the tabernacle. They could carry those things on the wagons. However, none were given to those

Levites who were to carry the furnishings of the tabernacle. They were supposed to carry those things on their shoulders. Each item of furniture had staves for carrying.

The rulers of each tribe also offered an oblation for the dedication of the altar. Offerings were given for each of twelve days. When the tabernacle was erected and dedicated, the Bible says, **“And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with him, then he heard the Voice speaking to him from above the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, and he spoke to him”** (Numbers 7:89).

The Bible says the cloud covered the tabernacle on the day it was reared up. The cloud covered it during the day, and at night it had the appearance of fire. That probably means it glowed brightly. Whenever the cloud was taken up, the sons of Israel journeyed. And wherever the cloud stayed, there the sons of Israel encamped.

Jehovah also commanded Moses to make two silver trumpets. They were used to signal various things. Sometimes they were used to call everybody to the tabernacle. Sometimes they called only the rulers to the tabernacle. Sometimes they signaled the beginning of a march. And sometimes they gave an alarm about war. Jehovah also said, **“And in the day of your gladness, and in your set feasts, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. And they shall be to you for a memorial before your God: I am Jehovah your God”** (Numbers 10:10).

On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the Bible says, **“... the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony. And the sons of Israel set forward according to their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai, and the cloud abode in the wilderness of Paran”** (Numbers 10:11-12). They moved out in an orderly fashion as they were commanded.

Sometime later the people began to murmur and complain, so Jehovah sent a fire among them. However, when Moses prayed to him the fire ended. After that the Bible says the sons of Israel began to weep again. They said, **“Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic, but now our soul is dried away. There is nothing at all except this manna to look upon”** (Numbers 11:4-6).

Their constant complaining made Moses very frustrated and discouraged. He even said to God, **“Why have thou dealt ill with thy servant? And why have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou lay the burden of all this people upon me?”** The people had made Moses very miserable. He even told God he would rather die than continue to bear them alone. Therefore, Jehovah told Moses to gather seventy men of the elders of Israel to him at the tent of meeting (the tabernacle). God told Moses he would use those men to help him.

Next Jehovah told Moses to tell the people that Jehovah was going to give them meat to eat the next day because of their complaining. God also told Moses to say to them, **“Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days, but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome to you, because ye have rejected Jehovah who is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why did we come forth out of Egypt?”** (Numbers 11:16-20).

When Moses heard that he wondered how God could possibly do it. However, Jehovah said to Moses, **“Is Jehovah’s hand grown short? Now thou shall see whether my word shall come to pass to thee or not”** (Numbers 11:21-23). Then Jehovah sent forth a wind, which brought quails in large numbers from the sea to the camp. However, when the people began to eat, the Bible says, **“... the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the people, and Jehovah smote the people with a very great plague”** (Numbers 11:33).

Sometime after that Moses was criticized again. This time it was his own sister and brother, Miriam and Aaron. They criticized him about a Cushite woman whom he had married. Not much is known about her. However, they must have thought Moses was making himself too important. For they said to him, **“Has Jehovah indeed spoken only with Moses? Has he not spoken also with us?”** (Numbers 12:2).

It seems Moses was not going to argue with them or defend himself. In fact the Bible says, **“Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth”** (Numbers 12:3). There are many examples in the Bible about how courageous Moses was. Yet he was a meek and humble man, completely unselfish. Nevertheless, God defended him.

Jehovah told all three of them to come to the tent of meeting.

Then he said to them, **“Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so. He is faithful in all my house. With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches, and he shall behold the form of Jehovah. Why then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?”** (Numbers 12:6-8).

Jehovah was angry with Miriam and Aaron for accusing Moses falsely. Therefore, when the cloud was taken up from over the tent, Miriam was leprous. When Aaron saw it he pleaded with Moses for her. He said, **“Oh, my lord, lay not, I pray thee, sin upon us, in which we have done foolishly, and in which we have sinned”** (Numbers 12:11). Therefore, Moses prayed to Jehovah that he would heal her. God said to him that she should be put out of the camp seven days. After that she would be healed. God would forgive her, but she had to be punished. The Bible does not teach forgiveness means having no punishment. It means not having all we deserve.

After that Jehovah commanded Moses to send spies to the land of Canaan. Moses selected one man from each of the twelve tribes, and he gave instructions to them. So they departed, and returned after forty days. They said the land was a very good land. However, they also said the people in it were too strong for them. They said, **“And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight”** (Numbers 13:33). Only Joshua and Caleb supported the invasion.

When the people heard the report they became frightened and discouraged. The Bible says they all wept that night. The next day they began to revolt, saying **“Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt”** (Numbers 14:4). Joshua and Caleb tried to calm their fears, but the people wanted to stone Moses and Aaron.

Then the Bible says the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tabernacle. God had shown them so many great signs and wonders, yet they still would not believe in him. He told Moses that he was going to destroy them all. However, Moses pleaded again with God to forgive them. Jehovah told Moses that he would pardon them. He would not destroy them, but they would be punished. None of them except Joshua and Caleb would enter into the promised land. They would have to wander in the wilderness forty years. They would wander until every man of them from twenty years and upward had

died. Forgiveness does not mean having no punishment.

When the people heard the curse against them, they confessed their sin and repented. They also said they would invade the land. But it was too late, and Moses warned them against it. Yet they even rebelled at that, and tried anyway. However, they were defeated because God was not with them. Also the ten spies who gave the evil report soon died from a plague.

Sometime later Moses faced another rebellion. Korah was a Levite, and he led 250 rulers of the congregation against Moses. There were also three other rebels named Dathan, Abiram, and On. Korah and his group accused Moses and Aaron of taking too much authority. It seems they wanted as much as Moses had. And apparently the people did not rally to support Moses either. Jehovah was again so disgusted with them that he said he was going to destroy the whole congregation.

Therefore, Moses again fell on his face, and persuaded God not to destroy them all. God said he would spare them again. However, he told Moses to command the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (the other man must have repented). Then the earth opened up and swallowed those three men and their families. They all fell down into the opening of the ground. And the earth closed back up again, burying them alive. After that the Bible says fire came forth from Jehovah and devoured the 250 rulers who had joined Korah.

However, on the very next day the congregation gathered against Moses and Aaron. They said, “**Ye have killed the people of Jehovah**” (Numbers 16:41). Moses had saved their lives by praying to Jehovah for them. Yet they blamed him for causing the ground to open up and the fire to come forth to destroy the sinners. That caused Jehovah to send a plague among the people. So Moses told Aaron to quickly make atonement for the people. Aaron obeyed Moses, which stopped the plague, but not before 14,700 had died.

God was also angry because the sons of Israel kept challenging Aaron’s authority. Therefore, he said he was going to prove to them he had chosen Aaron. Jehovah told Moses to take a rod from the ruler of each tribe, and write each man’s name on his rod. And he was to place their rods and Aaron’s rod in front of the ark of the covenant.

The next day Aaron’s rod had grown buds. It produced blossoms, and even had ripe almonds on it. Remember, they were in a

wilderness where such a thing could normally not be found. Then Jehovah commanded Moses to return each man's rod to him. However, he was to place Aaron's rod in the most holy place. God told Moses it was **"to be kept for a sign against the sons of rebellion, that thou may make an end of their murmurings against me, that they not die"** (Numbers 17:10).

After seeing all of those signs, the sons of Israel said to Moses, **"Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. Every man who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of Jehovah, dies. Shall we all of us perish?"** (Numbers 17:12-13). So God told Aaron that only he and his sons were to do the ministry of the tabernacle and the altar. The other Levites would help them, but they could not come near the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar. Everyone else was to keep back to prevent further wrath upon them.

Next Jehovah told Aaron what payment he was to be given for all his work. Jehovah said, **"All the best of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the grain, the first-fruits of them which they give to Jehovah, I have given them to thee"** (Numbers 18:12). However, Jehovah also told Aaron that he would have no inheritance in the land. For he said, **"I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the sons of Israel"** (Numbers 18:20). Neither was the tribe of Levi to receive an inheritance in the land. They were supposed to be given the tithe of the sons of Israel. A tithe is one-tenth of what they produced. Sometime later Miriam died in the wilderness of Zin and was buried there.

Again there was a time when they had no water, and the people criticized Moses. They blamed him for making them leave Egypt for what they called "this evil place." Jehovah told Moses to take his rod, with his brother Aaron, and gather together the congregation. Then he was to go to the rock and speak to it while the people watched. God said when he spoke to it then water would come out for them. However, instead of speaking to the rock, Moses struck it with his rod, saying, **"Hear now, ye rebels. Shall we bring forth water to you out of this rock?"** (Numbers 20:10).

That was very unlike Moses. The people had persecuted him for so long that he let his feelings make him act rashly. He went beyond what God told him. He struck the rock instead of speaking to it. The Bible says God did bring water from the rock. However, he told Moses and Aaron that now they could not go into the promised land. Those were called the waters of Meribah. Sometime after that

Aaron died, and Eleazar his son was given his place. The Bible says the people mourned for Aaron thirty days.

The sons of Israel continued to travel around. Then the Bible says they **“encamped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho”** (Numbers 22:1). Balak was the king of Moab, and the Bible says he was exceedingly afraid of the sons of Israel. He saw how they had defeated some other countries. So he sent messengers with gifts to a prophet named Balaam. He wanted him to curse the sons of Israel. He said, **“For I know that he whom thou bless is blessed, and he whom thou curse is cursed”** (Numbers 22:6).

Balaam told the messengers to wait until the next day for his answer. Then God said to Balaam, **“Thou shall not go with them. Thou shall not curse the people, for they are blessed”** (Numbers 22:12). Therefore, Balaam told them Jehovah would not let him go. However, Balak sent even higher officials back to Balaam. And he promised him much honor. Balaam told his messengers that he could do nothing beyond the word of Jehovah. Nevertheless, he told them to wait and see what Jehovah would say next. This time God told him to go with them, but only speak what he was told.

On the way the donkey Balaam was riding kept giving him trouble. First she wandered off the road, and went into a field. So Balaam struck her with his staff. Then she crushed his foot against the rock of a narrow place in the road. So Balaam struck her with his staff again. Finally, she just quit walking, and sat down. So Balaam struck her with his staff a third time. The donkey did all of those things to escape from God’s agent who had been in the way. However, the agent was invisible to Balaam, so he did not know why.

After he struck his donkey the third time Jehovah caused the donkey to speak to Balaam. She said, **“What have I done to thee, that thou have smitten me these three times?”** (Numbers 22:28). Balaam was so angry he did not even wonder how the donkey could talk. He just said to her, **“Because thou have mocked me. I would there were a sword in my hand, for now I would have killed thee”** (Numbers 22:29). The donkey reminded him how faithful she had been in the past. Then God made the agent visible to him. And the agent told him that if his donkey had not moved out of the way he would have killed him and saved her alive. Balaam had sinned by questioning Jehovah the second time. So apparently to punish him, God told him to go the second time. However, it would not be to do what Balak wanted.

When Balaam came to Balak he took him out to where they could see the camp of the sons of Israel. Three times at three different places Balak built seven altars and sacrificed seven bullocks and seven rams. And each time Balaam blessed the sons of Israel instead of cursing them. The record says that Balak became angry and sent Balaam away after rebuking him. Because Balaam had questioned Jehovah's decision about the sons of Israel, he ended up being rebuked by God and Balak both.

However, Balaam sinned even more by giving counsel against the sons of Israel. It seems on his advice Moabite women went out and tempted the sons of Israel to sin. For the book of Revelation says, "... **Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, even to eat idol sacrifices, and to fornicate**" (Rev 2:14). Therefore, the Bible says, "**And the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab, for they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods. And the people ate, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself to Baal-peor**" (Numbers 25:1-3). Balaam must have told Balak that if the sons of Israel sinned against Jehovah he would have a better chance of defeating them. Indeed, American soldiers committed much fornication with the Vietnamese women and America lost the war there.

The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel when they sinned that way, and he said to Moses, "**Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them up to Jehovah before the sun, that the fierce anger of Jehovah may turn away from Israel**" (Numbers 25:4). Therefore, Moses said to the judges of Israel, "**Kill ye every one his men who have joined themselves to Baal-peor**" (Numbers 25:5). The sons of Israel had again declared war against Jehovah when they began to worship the gods of the Moabites. So he killed many of them. Jehovah also commanded Moses to fight against the Midianites because of that. The Midianites were in the land of Moab.

Sometime later Jehovah told Moses to take another census. He said, "**Take the sum of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go forth to war in Israel**" (Numbers 26:2). This time the total number was 601,730. That was 1,820 less than the first census. And of the original population the Bible says, "**And there was not a man of them left, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun**" (Numbers 26:65). It was

fulfillment of the curse that God had put upon them for their sins.

Next the book tells about dividing the land. The promised land was to be divided among the tribes according to the census. Jehovah said to Moses, **“To the many thou shall give more inheritance, and to the few thou shall give less inheritance”** (Numbers 26:54). However, the land was to be divided by lot. That was like drawing straws. And since God controls such things (see Proverbs 16:33), he would determine how the land was divided. However, the Levites were not numbered because they had no land inheritance.

Then the daughters of Zelophehad came to Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and the rulers of the congregation. They came to them at the door of the tent of meeting. And they asked if they could receive their father’s inheritance because he had no son. They said, **“Why should the name of our father be taken away from among his family, because he had no son?”** (Numbers 27:4). After bringing the case to God, Jehovah said, **“The daughters of Zelophehad speak right”** (Numbers 27:7). He told them they could have their father’s inheritance. And he made an ordinance that if a man died without a son, then his inheritance was to go to the nearest kin.

Sometime after that, Jehovah told Moses that it was time for him to die. And so he was to lay his hands upon Joshua, and present him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation, to be his successor. And Moses obeyed God.

Next the book gives Jehovah’s commands about the various offerings at the altar. He told them what was required daily, on every sabbath day, and at the beginning of each month. He also told what was required at the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, and the feast of weeks. He also told of the things required in the seventh month. During that month they had offerings on the first day, the tenth day (the day of atonement), and the seven days of the feast of tabernacles.

Next the book describes commands about vows. First, Moses said, **“When a man vows a vow to Jehovah, or swears an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth”** (Numbers 30:2). It is very common for men to make a vow to God, but not do their part. They often give excuses saying that God does not care. However, the Bible says it is very important for a man to keep his part of a vow.

There was also a difference between men and women making vows. The law said that when a man vowed to God, he was bound by what he said. However, it was different for wives and daughters. God said that a woman's husband could cancel her vow when he heard about it. If he said nothing, however, then it would stand. And the same thing was true for a daughter who was living with her father. He could cancel it as soon as he heard about it. However, a widow or divorced woman was bound by her vow.

Next Jehovah said to Moses, **“Avenge the sons of Israel of the Midianites. Afterward thou shall be gathered to thy people”** (Numbers 31:2). Therefore, Moses sent a thousand troops from each tribe, twelve thousand men, against Midian. He also sent Eleazar the priest with the vessels of the sanctuary and the trumpets for the alarm. The troops killed every male, including their kings. The record says they also killed Balaam with the sword. And they burnt all of their cities and encampments. However, they took their women and little children captive, as well as all of their livestock and other goods. Moses, Eleazar, and the congregation all went out to meet them outside the camp when they returned.

However, Moses was angry with the officers because they kept the women alive. He reminded them they were the ones who had caused them to sin against Jehovah. Therefore, he told them to kill all the boy children, and the women who were not virgins. He also told them how to purify themselves and the things they brought back.

Then he told them to inventory all of the living things that were taken—the virgin girls and the livestock. And they were to divide them into two groups. Half were for the men who went to battle, and half were for all the congregation. That meant each man who fought received a lot more than any who remained in the camp. The soldiers who fought were also allowed to keep the goods they found for themselves in Midian. During Bible times the men who risked their lives in battle received the most.

Sometime later, two of the tribes, the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad came. And they approached Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the rulers of the congregation. They asked if they could settle on the eastern side of the Jordan river. They had much cattle, and the territory was good there. Moses first criticized them. He said they were discouraging the people from going over into the promised land. However, they promised that all their men of war would cross over and fight with the others. So Moses agreed. Half of the

sons of Manasseh also chose to settle on the eastern side.

After that, Jehovah commanded Moses about giving cities to the Levites. They were to have forty-eight cities, plus the surrounding land out to about three thousand feet. Six of the cities were to be cities of refuge, three on the eastern side of the Jordan, and three on the western side. The cities of refuge were for **“the manslayer who kills any person unwittingly”** (Numbers 35:11).

Any man who murdered another was to be killed by **“the avenger of blood”** (Numbers 35:19). That usually meant that a close relative of the victim would execute the murderer. For example, if some man murdered your father, then your family would have the right to execute the murderer. That law is so much better than what we have in America. Victims and their families in America have virtually no rights. Moses said no murderer, however, could be convicted on the testimony of only one person. There had to be at least two witnesses.

On the other hand, if a man killed someone else accidentally, then he could live in one of the cities of refuge. However, he had to stay there until the death of the high priest. If he was found outside the city before then, he could be killed legally by the avenger of blood. Such a law encourages people to be more careful about the lives of others.

The book concludes with how another problem of land inheritance was settled. Remember the earlier case of the daughters of Zelophehad? Jehovah told them they could inherit their father’s land because he had no sons. However, some men later came to Moses, and warned that the land might be lost to their tribe. They said if those daughters married a man of a different tribe, the land would go to his tribe. Therefore, Jehovah commanded all such women to only marry within their own tribes. And the Bible says the daughters of Zelophehad did so.

## A Description of **Deuteronomy**

Deuteronomy means second law, because in it Moses reviewed many of their laws, and added some others. The book begins, **“These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness.”** The sons of Israel had spent about a year at mount Sinai. It was a distance of only eleven days journey from there to the southern border of Canaan. Yet God did not allow

them to go in when they got there because they were so rebellious. Instead he made them wait forty years, until there was a new generation.

That new generation was getting ready to invade the promised land. And most of this book is a record of what Moses told them then. He began by reviewing some of their history. He first said God had commanded them at Horeb to go toward to the promised land. He said when they came near the land, they asked him to send men to search it out. So he sent twelve of them as spies. When they reported back they said that it was a good land. However, they also said the people in it were big and powerful. All the spies, except Joshua and Caleb, said they would not be able to defeat them.

Moses said that when the people heard the report they complained. They said **“Because Jehovah hated us, he has brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us”** (Deuteronomy 1:27). Moses said he tried to calm their fears. He assured them that Jehovah their God would fight for them as he had in Egypt. Yet they did not believe him. Therefore, God became angry, and he condemned them to die in the wilderness. They would have to stay there forty years. And only their children would remain alive to enter the promised land. When the people heard that, they repented and wanted to invade. Jehovah warned them not to go. Yet they went anyway, but were defeated because God was not with them.

Next Moses told them about some of their travels in the wilderness. God had commanded them to avoid war with the descendants of Esau and Lot. However, they did fight against some other countries and took their lands. Some of the sons of Israel were allowed to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan. However, their men had to cross over and help the others fight the Canaanites.

Moses also told them about how he had begged Jehovah to let him go into the promised land. God refused, and told him not to ask any more. Jehovah said he could see the land from a mountain top, but he could not go in. Jehovah told him to encourage Joshua instead. Joshua was going to lead the people across the Jordan.

Then Moses told how he had taught them the laws of God. And he encouraged them to be obedient. He said it would make them wise, and the other nations would admire them. He told them how the mountain in Horeb **“burned with fire to the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness”** (Deuteronomy 4:11).

He told them how Jehovah spoke to them out of the fire, giving them the ten commandments. And Jehovah later wrote those commandments on two tablets of stone for them.

Moses warned them not to make a graven image, or worship anything else, because God chose them to be his people. And Moses told them again that because of them Jehovah became angry with him. That is why he could not go across the Jordan. That is a good lesson for us. The Bible says Jehovah took Moses to heaven after he died (see Matthew 17:3). However, he would not take away his punishment on earth. If Jehovah would not take away Moses' earthly punishment, should we think he will take away all of ours?

Moses warned them not to forget their covenant with God, and make idols for themselves. He even said, **“For Jehovah thy God is a consuming fire, a jealous God”** (Deuteronomy 4:24). Moses kept encouraging the sons of Israel. He asked them if any other people had ever heard God speak out of a fire like they had. He asked them if God had ever taken any other people out of another nation with such mighty wonders.

He said they were allowed to see all those things so they would know that Jehovah is the only God. And also he brought them out of Egypt to give them the promised land because he loved their forefathers. He said therefore they ought to obey his commandments. That would be good for them and their children. Then Moses set apart three cities of refuge on the eastern side of the Jordan.

This next part of the book of Deuteronomy tells how Moses began to teach them again about the laws that Jehovah had given them. He first reminded them of the covenant Jehovah made with them in Horeb. He said, **“Jehovah spoke with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire”** (Deuteronomy 5:4). Then Moses told them again what the ten commandments were that God spoke. Briefly, they are (1) Jehovah alone is God and they should have no others, (2) they were not to make any graven images or worship them, (3) they were not to take his name in vain, (4) they were to observe the sabbath day, (5) they were to honor their father and their mother; and they were (6) not to murder, (7) not to commit adultery, (8) not to steal, (9) not to bear false witness against their neighbor, and (10) not to covet anything that belonged to their neighbor.

Moses reminded them how frightened they were by the voice of

God they heard from the fiery mountain. Their leaders even asked Moses to speak to them instead of God. They promised to obey, but they did not obey. And so they spent forty years in the wilderness. Which meant only their children were still alive to remember those things.

Then he gave what Jesus said was the greatest of all the commandments: **“Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. And thou shall love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”** (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Moses told the sons of Israel to keep Jehovah’s commandments always with them. He said they were to teach them to their sons. They were to talk about them when they sat in their houses, and when they were walking along. They were to talk about them when they laid down, and when they rose up. He said they were to tie them to their bodies, and post them wherever there was a lot of traffic.

Moses warned the people again. He said when they are given the good things of the land which Jehovah promised, they should beware lest they forget Jehovah, and go after other gods. He told them if they did then Jehovah would destroy them in his anger. However, if they were diligent to do right then it would be well with them.

Then he told them to teach their sons why they have all those various laws. They were to tell them how Jehovah rescued them from slavery in Egypt. And how he brought them to the land he had sworn to give to their fathers. Therefore, Jehovah gave them all those commandments, so he could bless them and protect them.

And again Moses warned them not to make any treaties with the nations they were supposed to destroy. Neither were they to make any marriages with them. They were instead to utterly destroy them—without mercy. And they were to break down all their religious objects and burn them. He said to them, **“For thou are a holy people to Jehovah thy God. Jehovah thy God has chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth”** (Deuteronomy 7:6).

Moses said God is faithful and loving to those who love and obey him. However, he will also repay those who hate him by destroying them. Moses told them if they would be obedient, then God would love them and bless them. He said, **“Thou shall be blessed above all peoples”** (Deuteronomy 7:14).

And again he told them to destroy the nations in their promised land. He said, **“Thine eye shall not pity them. Neither shall thou serve their gods, for that will be a snare to thee”** (Deuteronomy 7:16). He told them not to be afraid of them. He said God would send hornets against them to drive them out. With many other words Moses told them they would be victorious. And he again warned them to destroy their gods, and burn their graven images. He said they should hate every object of their worship because they are accursed things. He again urged them to be obedient.

Then he said that God led them in the wilderness to make them humble and to test them. He let them become hungry, and fed them with the manna. Those things were to teach them that **“man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Jehovah”** (Deuteronomy 8:3). He also told them to notice that God was treating them like sons when he punished them. Therefore, they should obey him and fear him.

Moses spoke many other words of encouragement to them. He told them what a good land Jehovah was giving them. He warned them not to become proud, and forget Jehovah when they became prosperous. He said if they went after other gods, then Jehovah would make them perish like the nations of Canaan. He said God was not giving them the land because they were so good. They were really stubborn and proud. He was giving the land to them because the people of Canaan were so bad.

And he told them not to forget how many times they had rebelled against Jehovah. He described the time of the golden calf when they had corrupted themselves. And he also reminded them how they had rebelled against God’s command to invade the land. Moses said, **“Ye have been rebellious against Jehovah from the day that I knew you”** (Deuteronomy 9:24).

Moses said God is always just, and he loves foreigners. They were foreigners in Egypt, so they should love foreigners. Again he told them to fear Jehovah, and love him and serve him. Moses mentioned how Jehovah had drowned the army of Egypt. He told them how he had opened the mouth of the earth to swallow up the men who rebelled. He said they had seen the great work of Jehovah, so they should obey him.

And again he urged them to keep the words of God always near them. He said they should teach them to their sons, and talk about them. And they should write them on the door-posts of their houses

so they would be blessed in the land. He told them if they were obedient, then their country would be large, and they would be powerful among the nations. He said the other nations would be afraid of them, because no man would be able to oppose them.

Then he said, **“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse”** (Deuteronomy 11:26). They would be blessed for obedience, and cursed for disobedience. And again he commanded them to destroy all the religious objects of those nations.

Next Moses said to them that God would choose a special place where they must make their sacrifices and offerings. God later chose Jerusalem for that place. And he warned them not to make their burnt-offerings anywhere else. They could eat meat in their own places if the one that God chose was too far away. However, they could not eat their offerings anywhere but the place God chose. And they could never eat blood.

And he again said that obedience to Jehovah would be good for them. And again he warned them against the gods of the nations they were supposed to drive out. He said those people had done for their gods every evil thing that Jehovah hates. They even burnt their children in sacrifice to them. And again he told them to be obedient to what he commanded them. Many times Moses urged them to be obedient to God.

Then he instructed them about prophets. He said never to listen to any man who tells them to serve another god, even if he makes a correct prediction. Instead, they should kill that man. And he said they should do the same thing even if it was a brother, or a son, or a daughter, or a wife, or a close friend. And he told them to utterly destroy any city if the people in it turned away from Jehovah. However, they first had to prove it was true.

Then Moses described the kinds of animals they could eat and not eat. And he spoke about tithing. One tithe was to be made every three years, and they were to store it in their cities. It was to be kept for the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless, and the widows who might live in them. That meant they would always have something to eat. If they did things like that God would bless all their work. That seems to be the only example of a simple handout to the needy by the community. Remember however, Paul later warned, **“If any man will not work, neither let him eat”** (2nd Thessalonians 3:10). God does not want us to support lazy men.

Next Moses spoke about the seventh-year release. He said dur-

ing the year of release a man did not have to repay anything he had borrowed. The year of release would be a year of generosity by lenders. Not everyone agrees about what that means. I think it means debtors could delay repayment during the seventh year, but they had to repay after that. For example, if a man bought an ox he would not have to make any payments the seventh year. However, he would still have to pay for it after that. That is what I think it means. Anyway, they knew what it meant, because Moses encouraged them to be obedient. And he said again that God would bless them. He said, “... **thou shall lend to many nations, but thou shall not borrow, and thou shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over thee**” (Deuteronomy 15:6).

Moses spoke again about the poor. He told the sons of Israel to lend the poor enough for their needs. That probably meant for food and shelter, not for everything they wanted. And he encouraged them not to be sorry when they gave. He said Jehovah would bless all their labor so they would be able to help the poor. He said there would always be the poor and needy, therefore they should be generous to them.

Moses also told them about releasing bondmen at the end of six years service. That was kind of like signing up for the U.S. Army for six years. When the time is up they release you. Moses also urged the sons of Israel to be generous when a bondman left them.

Moses reminded them that all the firstborn males of their animals were for God. They had to take them to the special place Jehovah chose. They were not to use them for any other purpose. However, they were not supposed to bring any that had a blemish. He also reminded them to observe their special feasts in the place Jehovah chose. There was the Passover followed by the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. And Moses said the times of their feasts were to be times of rejoicing.

Then he commanded them to appoint judges and officers “in all thy gates.” That probably meant in all their walled cities. And he said they were to judge fairly. They were not to play favorites, nor were they to take a bribe. He said bribes pervert what is right. And they should do what is just so they could survive in the land.

Moses gave the qualifications of a king whenever they decided to set one over them. Then he told them about supporting the priests, the Levites, because they would have no inheritance in the

land. Also he warned them not to kill their children, and not to listen to people like astrologers and psychics. He said God was going to drive out the peoples of Canaan because they did those things.

Next Jehovah told Moses that he was going to raise up another son of Israel to be a prophet like him. That prophet would also speak the words of Jehovah, and God wanted the people to listen to him. In the New Testament Peter said that prophet was Jesus Christ (see Acts 3:22). Then the Lord warned the people about false prophets. He said they could recognize them if any of their predictions failed.

Moses also warned about removing landmarks. Then he spoke about giving testimony. He said if a man proved to be a false witness against another man, then the liar should get whatever penalty was involved. Say, for example, a man lied about who robbed someone. When the truth became known then the liar should be given the same penalty the robber would get. That way people would be afraid to give false testimony.

Next Moses gave some special laws about going to war. He said when they went forth to battle, the priest was to go with them. And the priest was to tell the men not to be afraid, but that God would fight for them. Then the officers were to tell every man who had not yet lived in his new house to go home. Also any man who had not yet lived with his new wife was to go home. And they were even to tell every man who was afraid to go home. He said a man who is afraid might cause other men to become afraid. And that is not good in wartime. It is better to have a few courageous men, than a lot of cowards. Moses also told them about how to treat cities they were going to fight against.

Next he told them what to do in the case of an unsolved murder. Then he told them about the rights of certain wives and children. After that he told how a wild rebellious son could be put to death. Then he gave several brief laws about various other things. For example, he said if they saw a brother Israelite's ox or sheep go astray, they should bring it back to him.

He also said women were not to wear clothes that looked the same as for men. And men were not to wear clothes that looked the same as for women. Moses said that was an abomination to Jehovah. Modern American women often dress like men, which makes them look abominable to God. But sinners do not care what pleases God.

He also described what was to be done if a man accused his wife of not being a virgin when he married her. If she was innocent the man was to be publicly punished. Also he had to pay her father a hundred shekels. A hundred shekels was a lot of money. However, if she was guilty she was to be stoned. And again Moses said, “**So shall thou put away the evil from the midst of thee**” (Deuteronomy 22:21). Then Moses told what was to be done in various cases of rape.

After that he told about different kinds of men who were to be excluded from the “assembly of Jehovah.” What that means is not clear, but it may mean not being given full citizenship. And again he listed several brief laws about various things. He said they should bury their body waste properly. They should allow an escaped servant to remain free. The terrible civil war of America could have been avoided if slaves had been treated like the law of Moses taught.

Moses said none of their daughters should be a harlot. And none of them should be a sodomite. They should not charge interest to a brother Israelite. They should keep their vows to God. He told them how they could eat from another man’s crops. He told them about divorcing a woman. He also said when a man marries a wife, he should be allowed to remain home with her for one year. They should not make him go in the army, or do any other business that took him away.

He also told them a man could be whipped for punishment, but with no more than forty stripes. That was to prevent humiliating him. Whipping, including adults, was commonly done in America when there was much less crime and more freedom to live right. Some other nations still do it. For example, in Singapore they whip with a small bamboo rod for minor crimes. They call it caning. And Singapore is one of the safest and most law abiding countries. I have been there, and the people are prosperous and happy with their government.

Jehovah commanded them to set up great stones after they had crossed the Jordan. They were to plaster them, and write the words of the law on them. He probably meant the ten commandments. They were also to build an altar with non-carved stones. And they were to sacrifice offerings, and eat and rejoice before God there.

Moses also commanded them about a blessing and a curse. They were to speak them aloud after they crossed the Jordan. Six of the

tribes were to stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, and the other six were to stand on mount Ebal to speak the curse. The Levites were to shout the curses, and after each one the people were to say, Truly. There were twelve curses, and they were about things they were not supposed to do. Examples are these: making a molten image, dishonoring father or mother, leading the blind the wrong way. The last one said, **“Cursed is every man who does not continue in all the words of this law to do them”** (Deuteronomy 27:26).

Then Moses described Jehovah’s blessings for their obedience, and his curses for disobedience. For obedience he said they would be blessed in the city and in the field. He said the fruit of their body would be blessed. He said the fruit of their ground would be blessed, and the fruit of their livestock would be blessed. He said they would be blessed when they came in, and they would be blessed when they went out. He said they would defeat their enemies. They would be prosperous, and they would be a leader among the nations. However, all those things required them to be faithful in obedience to God.

The description of Jehovah’s curses against them for disobedience is much longer. They would be cursed in the city and in the field. The fruit of their body would be cursed, the fruit of their ground would be cursed, and the fruit of their livestock would be cursed. They would be cursed when they came in, and when they went out. God said he would send all kinds of evils against them, including diseases, starvation, and defeat by enemies. He said the time would come when they would even eat their own children. And their nation would finally be destroyed. What few of them were left would be scattered among other nations. And even there they would struggle to survive in fear and sorrow. It is hard to think of worse things that could happen to them. Yet Moses said those things would happen to them if they were disobedient.

Moses urged them again to be obedient. He said the commandments were not too hard for them. He said their obedience would bring them blessings and long life. Then he said to them, **“I am a hundred and twenty years old this day”** (Deuteronomy 31:2). He said Jehovah would not allow him to cross the Jordan, but Jehovah would still be with them. He told them to be strong and of good courage, and not be afraid. He said Jehovah would not forsake them. Then he called Joshua who was to take his place, and he encouraged him.

After that the Bible says Moses wrote the law, and gave it to the priests and all the elders of Israel. And he told them to read the law to the people every year of release (the seventh year). That year they should gather all the people together at the feast of tabernacles. Then they should read the law to them so all the people could learn it. Remember, most people could not read during Bible times. Even Peter was illiterate.

After that the book says Jehovah told Moses to bring Joshua with him to the tabernacle. Jehovah appeared to them there in a pillar of cloud. And he told Moses to write a song for the people. God said that after the people had become prosperous in the land, they would turn to other gods and despise him. He said the song would be a reminder that Jehovah had warned them. The Bible says that Moses wrote the song that same day. He also commanded the Levites to put the book of the law beside the ark of the covenant.

Next Moses criticized the sons of Israel severely. He said, **“For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck. Behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah, and how much more after my death?”** (Deuteronomy 31:27). And he spoke the words of the song to the entire assembly of Israel. After those things the Bible says that Moses went up on the mountain, and Jehovah showed him all the land. Then Moses died, and no man knows where he was buried. The sons of Israel mourned for him thirty days.

## A Description of Joshua

Jehovah told Joshua that his servant Moses was dead. He said Joshua must now lead the people across the Jordan river to the promised land. Jehovah told him about the land, and he said, **“As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee”** (Joshua 1:5). Remember, they were going to be fighting a lot of strong enemies. Therefore, Jehovah told him to be strong and courageous, and not be afraid. He also urged him to keep all the law. Jehovah said he should think about it day and night. That would help him obey it, and obedience would give him success. That is a good lesson for us all. We should all think day and night about what the Bible teaches. That will help us obey God, and obedience will give us success.

Therefore Joshua commanded the officers to prepare the people

to invade the land. Then he spoke to the men of the two and a half tribes who settled on the eastern side of the Jordan. He reminded them of their promise to cross over and help the others. And they said they would obey him.

After that Joshua sent two spies across to see the land and the city of Jericho. When the men came to Jericho they stayed in the house of a harlot. Her name was Rahab. The king of the city heard of it, and he sent to arrest them. However, Rahab hid the spies. Then she told the king's men they had left the city. So they went out and searched for them. Then she told the spies how frightened the city was of the sons of Israel. And she made them swear they would not harm her and her father's house. So they did, and then left to hide in the mountains for a while. Later they returned to Joshua with their report.

Three days after arriving at the river, the sons of Israel prepared for the crossing. The officers commanded the people to watch for the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. When they saw the priests carrying it, they should follow, but stay far behind. Then Joshua said to the people, **“Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow Jehovah will do wonders among you”** (Joshua 3:5). And he told the priests to lead the people with the ark of the covenant. Jehovah told Joshua to command the priests with the ark to stand in the river. Then Joshua spoke again to the people. He said the way they crossed the river would prove that Jehovah was with them. He said when the priests' feet touched the river the waters would separate.

Therefore, the people went to cross the Jordan behind the priests carrying the ark of the covenant. The Bible says it was a time when the river was so full it overflowed its banks. Yet the waters separated when the priests' feet touched the water. So the priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan. And they remained there until all the nation had crossed over.

After all the people had crossed the river, Jehovah told Joshua to build a monument. He said twelve men should take twelve stones from where the priests had stood in the river. And they were to pile them up in their camp at Gilgal for a monument. That was to remind future generations of what Jehovah had done for them.

All the kings of the land heard how Jehovah had dried up the waters for the sons of Israel. And the Bible says it caused their hearts to melt with fear. Then all the sons of Israel were circumcised, because they had failed to do it in the wilderness. They also

kept the Passover feast in Gilgal. After that the manna quit coming, and they ate the food of the land.

When Joshua was near Jericho he saw a man with a sword opposite him. Joshua went to him, and said, “**Are thou for us, or for our adversaries?**” (Joshua 5:13). The man said he came as captain of the army of Jehovah. So Joshua fell on his face and worshiped. Then he said, “**What does my lord say to his servant?**” (Joshua 5:14). The captain of Jehovah’s army told him to take off his shoes, for the place where he stood was holy. Then Jehovah told Joshua how he wanted him to defeat Jericho.

They were to walk around the city with the ark of God once for each of six days. Seven priests were to blow seven trumpets ahead of the ark. The men of war were to be both in front and behind the ark. However, they were to utter no other sound. On the seventh day they were to go around the city seven times, then make a long trumpet blast. When the people heard the trumpet, they should all shout with a great shout. He said when they shout the wall of the city would fall down flat. Then they should attack.

Joshua told the people what they should do, and they obeyed him. On the seventh day, when the priests gave the trumpet signal, the people shouted. The wall fell down flat, and they utterly destroyed everything alive in the city. Except Joshua sent the two spies to rescue the harlot and all who were with her. However, Rahab must have stopped being a harlot, because the book says she “**dwelt in the midst of Israel to this day**” (Joshua 6:25).

The sons of Israel also burned the city and everything in it. Everything except the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron. Those things were to be for the treasury of the house of Jehovah. Then Joshua uttered a curse upon the city. He said two sons of the man who rebuilds it would die. His firstborn son would die when he laid the foundation. And his youngest son would die when he raised the gates of it. It must have been a very wicked city.

Next the book of Joshua says that the sons of Israel sinned against Jehovah in what was set apart. One of them took some of the things. Therefore God was angry with them, but the people did not know about it. The next city to be taken was Ai. Joshua told some men to spy out the land. When they returned they said it was a little place. They only needed to send a small force against them. So only three thousand troops went. However, they were defeated, and thirty-six of them were killed. The Bible says when that happened

**“the hearts of the people melted, and became as water”** (Joshua 7:5).

Joshua was troubled about the defeat at Ai. He tore his clothes and fell on his face before the ark of Jehovah until evening, he and the elders. And they put dust on their heads. Joshua asked Jehovah why he had brought them over to be defeated. However, Jehovah said to him, **“Get thee up. Why are thou thus fallen upon thy face? Israel has sinned”** (Joshua 7:10-11). Jehovah told him about the transgression. And he commanded him to prepare the people for tomorrow. Jehovah would first select the guilty tribe, then the guilty family, then the guilty household, then the guilty man. Joshua was to take the man with all that he had, and burn him with fire. Jehovah said it was **“because he has wrought folly in Israel”** (Joshua 7:15). When any man sins the whole community suffers to some degree. That is why punishment of the guilty is so important.

Joshua rose early the next morning, and did as Jehovah commanded him. The guilty man was named Achan. When Joshua talked with him he confessed. He said he had sinned against Jehovah. He had taken some clothes and silver and gold, and he buried them under his tent. Then Joshua sent messengers to get those things. After that they took Achan and his family with the things he had stolen. They stoned them, and burned them with fire. His family was included because they must have known what he had done.

After Achan was stoned Jehovah told Joshua to set an ambush for Ai. When all of the men of Ai came out to fight, Jehovah told Joshua to raise his javelin toward the city. Then the ambush entered the city and set it on fire. When the men of Ai looked back they saw the smoke rising. Then the sons of Israel attacked them from the front and the rear. They killed all the inhabitants of the city with the sword, and they hanged the king on a tree. Joshua kept his javelin pointed at the city until they were all destroyed, just as Jehovah commanded.

When all the kings on that side of the Jordan heard of their victories, they joined forces to fight Israel. However, the inhabitants of Gibeon decided to trick the men of Israel instead. They sent men who pretended to be ambassadors from a far distant land. They wore old clothes, and they had donkeys carrying old sacks with old bread and wine-skins. They told Joshua and the men of Israel they had heard of their fame. And so they wanted to make a peace treaty with them. The Bible says that the men of Israel **“did not ask counsel at the mouth of Jehovah”** (Joshua 9:14).

So Joshua made a peace treaty with them, and the rulers swore to it. However, after three days they discovered the truth. The congregation complained against the rulers for allowing them to live. However, the rulers said they could not harm them because they had sworn by Jehovah. Vows are very serious commitments, and they knew God expects them to be kept. Joshua asked the Gibeonites why they had deceived them. They said they were afraid. They said they knew Jehovah had commanded Moses to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. Therefore, the Israelites put them under a curse, and made them slaves to do manual labor for the priests.

When the king of Jerusalem heard what the Israelites were doing, he was very afraid. And he invited four other kings to join him against Gibeon. When the men of Gibeon saw the armies, they sent for Joshua to save them. Hence, because of the treaty they made with them, Joshua and the men of war went up from Gilgal. Jehovah told Joshua not to be afraid. He said none of the enemy would remain.

The Bible says that Joshua made a surprise attack, and Jehovah confused the enemy. Then the sons of Israel killed a large number of them. Also, as they were trying to escape, Jehovah sent great hail stones from the sky upon them. The Bible says more died from the hailstones than from the sword. Then Joshua prayed to God for the sun and the moon to stand still. And the Bible says it did for a whole day. There was never a day like it, either before or after.

However, the five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. Joshua was told about it, and he commanded them to cover the opening with large stones. Then they left guards there, and kept chasing their enemies. Joshua told his men not to let the enemy enter into their cities. So only a few were able to enter into their walled cities.

After all the killing, Joshua commanded the cave to be opened, and the kings brought out. Then he called all the men of Israel. And he told the army chiefs to put their feet on the necks of those kings. Joshua said, **“Fear not, nor be dismayed. Be strong and of good courage, for thus shall Jehovah do to all your enemies against whom ye fight”** (Joshua 10:25). Then Joshua killed the five kings, and hanged them on five trees until the evening. At evening they were cast into the cave, and great stones were placed over it.

That same day Joshua took the city of Makkedah. He utterly destroyed it and all the souls in it. The Bible says that Joshua

attacked all the land of that area and all their kings. He left none remaining. He destroyed them completely as Jehovah commanded. The Bible says Joshua was victorious because Jehovah fought for Israel. Then Joshua and his army returned to the camp at Gilgal.

Later the king of Hazor joined with several other kings to come against Israel. The Bible says their armies had so many men they were like the sand of the sea-shore. And they had very many horses and chariots. However, Jehovah told Joshua not to be afraid of them. Jehovah said he would deliver them all slain to Israel. And he was to hock their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

Therefore Joshua again made a surprise attack. He killed them all, and he did to their horses and chariots as Jehovah commanded him. Then Joshua turned back and took Hazor. He killed all who were in it, and burned the city with fire. And he did the same to all the cities of those kings. He utterly destroyed them, except for most of the ones built on mounds. The Bible says, **“As Jehovah commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that Jehovah commanded Moses”** (Joshua 11:13-15).

Afterward, the Bible says, **“Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the sons of Israel, except the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took all in battle. For it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that he might utterly destroy them, that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them as Jehovah commanded Moses”** (Joshua 11:18-20).

After that the Bible says Joshua was old, and Jehovah told him that much land remained to be possessed. Jehovah said he would drive their inhabitants out. However, he wanted Joshua to assign the land to the tribes of Israel. Caleb also came to Joshua in Gilgal. Remember, Caleb was one of the two faithful spies. He reminded Joshua of Jehovah’s promise to him, that Jehovah would give him certain land. He said, **“And now, lo, I am this day eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me”** (Joshua 14:10-11). Therefore, he asked for the land. So Joshua blessed him, and gave him Hebron for his inheritance. The Bible says he got his inheritance **“because he wholly followed Jehovah, the God of Israel”** (Joshua 14:14). And we will inherit a place in heaven if we wholly follow Jehovah.

All of the tribes were to receive their lands according to lot.

Joshua distributed the land to the different tribes. However, the Bible says that the people did not drive out all of the Canaanites. Instead, they made servants of them. Joshua also assigned the cities of refuge. Remember, those were for innocent men who might kill someone accidentally. Joshua also gave forty-eight cities to the Levites because they were not given a tribal land.

Then Joshua called together all the people with their leaders. And he encouraged them to always be faithful to Jehovah their God. He also told them to beware of other gods, not to serve them or even mention their names. He also told them not to allow the people of those nations to remain in the land. Otherwise, he said, they would be trouble for them. And they would eventually cause them to be destroyed. Those people were spiritually corrupt, and they would corrupt them.

Afterward Joshua again gathered all the tribes of Israel with their leaders. Joshua encouraged them to fear Jehovah, and serve him faithfully. He said, **“And if it seems evil to you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah”** (Joshua 24:14-15).

The people confessed it was Jehovah who brought them out of bondage. And it was he who drove out the nations of their promised land. Therefore, they would serve him. So the Bible says that Joshua made a covenant with the people that day. He set up a great stone, and told the people that it was a witness of what they had promised. Then he sent the people away **“every man to his inheritance”** (Joshua 24:28).

Sometime after that, Joshua, the servant of Jehovah, died at the age of 110 years. The Bible says that Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua. Those were the men who had seen all the work of Jehovah which he had done for Israel.

## A Description of Judges

After Joshua died the sons of Israel continued to fight the Canaanites. The book tells about some of their victories. However, it also says they did not drive out all the Canaanites from their land. Then an agent of Jehovah came from Gilgal to them. Jehovah reminded them how he had brought them out of Egypt to their promised land. And he said he would never break his covenant with them. He had commanded them to make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land. Yet they had not listened to his voice. He said because of that he was not going to drive them out. He was leaving them to be like thorns in their sides. And when the people heard the agent of Jehovah, they wept. They also sacrificed to Jehovah there. They liked to make sacrifices, but not to obey. People today are similar; they like to worship God, but not to obey.

After that the book tells how the sons of Israel treated Jehovah. They would be faithful to him for a while, but then they would turn to other gods. That would make him angry. So he would give them over to their enemies. Then after they had suffered a while, they would plead to him for help. And so he would raise up judges to save them. Yet after a while they would forsake him again for other gods. That happened many times. Therefore, God left many pagan people in their land. He did that to see if the sons of Israel would be faithful to him. But they never were for very long.

The sons of Israel first began to make marriages with the pagan people. Therefore, Jehovah was angry, and he gave them over to the king of Mesopotamia. They served him eight years. However, when the sons of Israel cried to Jehovah, he raised up Othniel to be a savior to them. The Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he fought against the king of Mesopotamia. Jehovah gave him victory, so the land had peace forty years.

After Othniel died the book says, **“And the sons of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah”** (Judges 3:12). So Jehovah strengthened Eglon the king of Moab. Israel served him eighteen years. However, they again cried to Jehovah. And he raised up another savior, Ehud from Benjamin. When Ehud went to give payment to Eglon, he told him he had a secret errand for him. When they were alone Ehud killed Eglon, and then he escaped. After that he blew a trumpet to call the sons of Israel against the Moabites. The book says they killed about 10,000 of them. Then

they had peace for eighty years.

After Ehud died the book says, “**And the sons of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah**” (Judges 4:1). So Jehovah gave them over to Jabin king of Canaan. His captain was Sisera. The sons of Israel again cried to Jehovah because Sisera oppressed them so much. He oppressed them twenty years.

Deborah was the wife of a man named Lappidoth. She was also a prophetess, and she judged Israel at that time. The sons of Israel would come to her for judgment under a palm tree. One day she called Barak out of the tribe of Naphtali, and gave him a command from God. Jehovah told him to take 10,000 men of the sons of Naphtali and Zebulun for an army. Jehovah told Barak he would give him victory over Sisera. However, Barak told Deborah that he would not go unless she went with him. Deborah said she would go, but the honor of taking Sisera would not go to him. It would go to a woman instead.

Therefore they went, and Barak did as Jehovah commanded. When Sisera came against Barak, Jehovah caused his army to be defeated. Sisera escaped to the tent of a friend. His friend’s wife was named Jael. And she gave him some milk and a place to sleep. However, while he slept she drove a tent-peg through his temple and killed him. Then the book says that Deborah and Barak sang a song of victory.

After that the book says the land had peace forty years. Then it says again, “**And the sons of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah**” (Judges 6:1). Therefore, God let the Midianites defeat them seven years. The Midianites were also very cruel. The book says they came as locusts for multitude. And they destroyed their crops and their livestock, which left them with only a little food. The book says, “**Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried to Jehovah**” (Judges 6:6).

Then Jehovah sent a prophet to the sons of Israel. Jehovah told them how he had brought them out of bondage in Egypt. He said he gave them the land of their enemies. He said he was Jehovah their God. And he had commanded them not to fear other gods, but they had not listened to him.

After that an agent of Jehovah came and appeared to a man named Gideon. Jehovah told him to go save Israel, and he would be with him. Jehovah told him to first break down his father’s altar of Baal, so he did. When the men of the city learned about it, they

wanted to kill him, but his father defended him.

After that the Bible says the whole Midianite army encamped in a valley. Then the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet to gather men from his clan. He also sent messengers to gather men from other tribes of Israel. Then Gideon asked Jehovah for a sign that he would save Israel. Gideon put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor. And he asked Jehovah to put dew on it, and not the ground. And it happened. Then he asked that the next day Jehovah put dew on the ground, but not on the fleece. And it happened.

Later Gideon and all his troops went near the camp of Midian. However, Jehovah told him he had too many people. He said if he used that many then Israel would become proud. They would claim the victory was theirs not Jehovah's. So he said to tell whoever was afraid to go home. And 22,000 departed, leaving 10,000 with Gideon. Jehovah said there were still too many. So he had Gideon bring them all to water, and pick out all who lapped with their hand. There were 300 of them. Jehovah commanded him to send all the rest home.

That night Gideon divided the men into three groups. He gave them trumpets and empty pitchers with torches inside. And he told them to watch, and do as he did. Then they came around the edge of the enemy camp in the middle of the night. They broke the pitchers, held the torches, and blew the trumpets. They also cried out, "**The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon**" (Judges 7:20).

The book says their enemies began to run and shout and flee. While the sons of Israel blew the trumpets, the enemy soldiers were so confused they began to kill each other. Then the men of Israel assembled from some other tribes to pursue Midian. There were only 15,000 men left of the 120,000 soldiers of the enemy army. After the victory the men of Israel asked Gideon and his son to rule over them. Then they had peace forty years.

Gideon had seventy sons from his many wives. One was named Abimelech. He came from Gideon's concubine in Shechem. After Gideon died the sons of Israel again turned away from God. The book says they "**played the harlot after the Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god**" (Judges 8:33). Abimelech even killed all seventy of his brothers. However, Jotham the youngest escaped.

The men of Shechem made Abimelech king. When Jotham heard about it, he stood on a mountain, and spoke a parable to them.

He concluded by saying if they did wrong then let fire come out between them and Abimelech. Then he fled for fear of his brother. Abimelech ruled Israel for three years. However, Jehovah sent evil between him and the men of Shechem. So Abimelech killed all of them. And he died later after a woman in a tower threw a millstone down upon him. Therefore, Abimelech was punished for killing his brothers. And the men of Shechem were killed for supporting Abimelech.

After Abimelech some other men judged Israel. Then the book says the sons of Israel again did evil. And they served many other gods. That made Jehovah angry, and he let the Philistines and the sons of Ammon oppress them. Because of that, Israel was exceedingly distressed. They cried to Jehovah, and confessed their sin. Jehovah reminded them how many times he had saved them. And he said, **“Therefore I will save you no more. Go and cry to the gods which ye have chosen. Let them save you in the time of your distress”** (Judges 10:13-14).

Yet they still pleaded with him. They also put away the foreign gods, and began to serve him. The book says that Jehovah was grieved for the misery of Israel. Fathers and mothers grieve when their children cry from punishment. Yet good parents must punish bad behavior. Foolish parents never punish.

Then the sons of Ammon and the sons of Israel gathered together for war. Both groups were in Gilead, which is on the eastern side of the Jordan. The rulers of Israel asked a man named Jephthah to lead them. He said he would if they would make him their head man, and they agreed. Jephthah first tried to tell the sons of Ammon that it was wrong to fight Israel. However their king would not listen. So the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jephthah, and he went over to fight them. But he made a very foolish vow to Jehovah. He said he would use for a burnt offering whatever came out of his house to meet him when he came back.

He defeated the sons of Ammon, but his daughter, an only child, came out to meet him. He was very sorry, but he kept his vow. She asked to mourn two months because she would never have children. Afterward, he did as he had vowed. Jephthah thought he was doing right, but he did very wrong. God expects us to keep our vows, but not when it causes us to sin. Jephthah judged Israel six years. After him there were three other judges.

Next the book says, **“And the sons of Israel again did that**

**which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years”** (Judges 13:1). Then the book tells about the birth of Samson. An agent of Jehovah appeared to the wife of a man named Manoah. She had no children, and the agent told her she was going to bear a son. The agent said he was to be a Nazarite from birth. That meant he should neither eat nor drink anything from grapes. And he was never to have his hair cut.

When he was grown he wanted to marry a Philistine woman. So he asked his father and mother to get her for him. They did not like the idea, but they went because he insisted. On the way a young lion threatened Samson. However, the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and he tore it apart like it was a kid (a young goat). He was a very strong man. Later he saw bees with honey inside the dead body of the lion. So he told a riddle to thirty young Philistines. It said, **“Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness”** (Judges 14:14). He said he would give all of them clothes if they could solve the riddle. If not they had to give him clothes.

They could not solve the riddle, so they threatened his wife. She pleaded with Samson to find out the solution, and he finally told her. She told the men, and they told the solution to Samson. He knew they got it from his wife, so he became angry. Then he went to another place, and killed thirty Philistines for their clothes. He gave them to the young men, and he left angry, without his wife.

Samson did many things against the Philistines. And he killed many of them because he was so strong. Jehovah was always with him because the Philistines were their enemies. The book says Samson judged Israel twenty years. However, a time came when he loved another Philistine woman. Her name was Delilah. And the rulers of the Philistines promised to give her money to find the secret of his great strength. After a couple of false tries, she finally got him to tell her. So she told the rulers, and they came with the money. Then while he slept she had his hair cut off. That took away his great strength. And the Philistines came and captured him.

They put out his eyes, and made him grind grain in a prison. However, his hair began to grow back. Later the Philistines brought Samson out to entertain them. Thousands of them were in a building worshipping Dagon their god. Samson prayed for Jehovah to return his strength. Then he pushed down the pillars that supported the building. It collapsed and killed all the people. Samson also

died because he asked Jehovah that he would die with them.

The last part of this book tells two stories about two different tribes of Israel. These stories may have been included to illustrate how ignorant of the law of Moses the people were, and how sinfully some of them were living.

The first story tells how some of the sons of Dan settled in the far north of Israel. There was a man of Ephraim named Micah. He had stolen eleven hundred pieces of silver from his mother. When he heard her utter a curse about it, he returned them to her. Then she dedicated part of it for Jehovah, to make a molten image. She must not have even known the ten commandments, because one of them forbids making images. After that the book says a young Levite was looking for somewhere to live. So Micah paid him to become his priest.

Later five men of the sons of Dan were sent out as spies for a place to live. That tribe had not yet conquered enough land for all of them. On their journey they came to the house of Micah. And they learned about the young Levite. So they asked him to inquire of God about their mission. The Levite did not have a legal right to do that, but he did anyway. The people were very ignorant of God's laws. The priest gave them an encouraging response. Then they departed and found a promising place to invade. So they returned, and urged the family of the Danites to go take it. The Bible says there were six hundred men of war for the campaign.

When they came to the house of Micah, the five men told them what he had. So they sent the five men to take the images and other religious objects. They also persuaded the Levite to join them. After they departed, Micah discovered what happened and he went after them. He wanted to get his things back, but they were too strong for him. Then the sons of Dan conquered their target city, and burned it with fire. After that they build the city of Dan. And they set up Micah's graven image for themselves.

The second story begins by telling about another Levite. He was living in Ephraim, and his concubine ran away to her father. After four months her husband went to get her. On the way back they spent the night at Gibeah, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. He was going to spend the night in the street, but an old man saw them. And he lodged them in his house.

After a while some evil men beat on the door. They were Sodomites, and they demanded the old man send the Levite out for

them. However, he spoke to them the same way Lot had. He refused, and criticized them for their wickedness. He also offered his virgin daughter and the man's concubine. Yet they would not listen. Nevertheless, the Levite sent his concubine out to them. They abused her all night, and in the morning the Levite found her dead at the door. Then he put her on a donkey and went to where he was going. When he got there he cut her corpse into twelve pieces, and sent the pieces throughout Israel.

The sons of Israel were very troubled when they saw the body-parts of the woman. They said no such thing had ever been seen in Israel. Therefore, they gathered together to Jehovah at Mizpah. After hearing the story from the Levite, they all agreed to punish the guilty men. However, the sons of Benjamin decided to fight to protect them. But after the third battle they were defeated, and all of them were killed except six hundred men.

After the war the sons of Israel grieved because the tribe of Benjamin had been destroyed. So they made peace with the few who remained. The men of Israel had sworn not to give their daughters to them for wives. However, they eventually found a couple of ways to get wives for them from some of the young women of Israel. Then the sons of Benjamin began to rebuild their cities.

### A Description of **Ruth**

During the days of the judges there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem went to live in Moab. However, he and both of his sons died there. So his widow Naomi decided to go back to Bethlehem. Her two sons had married Moabite women. She told them to go back to their mother's house, but one of them would not go.

That woman's name was Ruth, and when Naomi urged her to go back, she said, **"Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee, for where thou go, I will go, and where thou lodge, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts thee and me"** (Ruth 1:16-17).

Those are very beautiful words of loyalty. Ruth must have been attracted to the goodness she saw in Naomi and Jehovah her God, and she wanted to be a part of it. So they came to Bethlehem. It was

a small place, and all the people recognized Naomi.

They returned at the beginning of barley harvest. So Ruth asked Naomi if she could look for a field to glean. Naomi told her to go. Then she began to glean behind the reapers. She was in a field that belonged to a man named Boaz. He came from Bethlehem, and he asked who the young woman was. The foreman said it was the Moabite woman who came back with Naomi. He said she asked permission to glean, and had been there since morning. Boaz then told her to stay with his maidens. He said he would protect her, and she could drink of their water.

Then Ruth asked him why he was so kind to her, since she was a foreigner. Boaz said it was because he heard about her kindness to her mother-in-law. And he called upon Jehovah to bless her for trusting the God of Israel. So Ruth went into the city, and shared her gleanings with Naomi. When Ruth told her everything, Naomi praised Jehovah, and said Boaz was a near kinsman.

The book says that Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz until the end of the harvests. Afterward Naomi told her to dress well. Then go down to where Boaz was, but hide until he lay down for the night. Then she was to go in, uncover his feet, and lie down near him. And she did as her mother-in-law told her. At midnight Boaz woke up, and asked who she was. She said she was Ruth, and he was a near kinsman. That meant she wanted him to be her husband. He said he would, but there was another man who was a nearer kinsman. And he would speak with him about it.

The next day Boaz told the man how Naomi was selling the land that belonged to her husband, and he had the first right to it. The near kinsman said he would buy it. However, when Boaz told the man he would also have to take Ruth for a wife, he said he could not. So Boaz told the elders he was going to purchase the land, and would marry Ruth. Then the elders asked Jehovah to bless him and Ruth, and all their children.

Therefore, Ruth became his wife, and she bore him a son. And all the women rejoiced for Naomi, who also became a nurse to it. The child's name was Obed, who became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

## A Description of First Samuel

There was a man of the tribe of Ephraim named Elkanah. And he had two wives named Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children but Hannah had none. This man went to Shiloh each year to worship and sacrifice to Jehovah. He would give a double portion to Hannah because he loved her. Yet Jehovah had kept her from having children. During the sacrifice his other wife made her feel even worse about it. So Hannah wept, and would not eat, even though her husband tried to comfort her.

Then she prayed to Jehovah and made a vow. She told Jehovah that if he gave her a man-child she would give him to Jehovah all his life. Eli was the priest, and when he saw her mouth moving he thought she was drunk. So he criticized her, but she told him that she had been praying. Then Eli asked God to answer her prayer.

When she returned home in Ramah, Jehovah gave her a son. She named him Samuel. And after he was weaned, Hannah took him to Eli the priest at the house of Jehovah. She reminded him who she was, and said she was giving Samuel to Jehovah. Then Hannah prayed again there. She told how she was happy, and how wonderful Jehovah is.

The book says that the sons of Eli were not good men. It says they sinned greatly. However, Samuel served faithfully. Each year his mother would bring him a little robe that she had made. Jehovah also gave her more children. He gave her three sons and two daughters.

As time passed Eli became very old. He heard of all the evil his sons did to Israel, and he rebuked them for their sinfulness. He also told them they caused Jehovah's people to sin. He warned them not to offend Jehovah, but they would not listen. However, Samuel was different. He was a good and faithful man.

Then a man of God came to Eli, and gave him a message from Jehovah. Jehovah wanted to know why Eli honored his sons more than he did God, because he would not stop them. Then Jehovah said he would no longer bless the house of Eli. Jehovah said none of them would live to old age. He also said both his sons would die in one day as proof. Jehovah told Eli he would raise up a faithful priest.

Later Jehovah warned Eli once again, this time through Samuel.

He spoke to Samuel one night, and said to him, **“Behold, I will do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of everyone who hears it shall tingle”** (1st Samuel 3:11). Then he told him of the terrible things that were going to happen to Eli and his family. The next morning Eli demanded to know what Jehovah had said. When Samuel told him, Eli said, **“It is Jehovah. Let him do what seems him good”** (1st Samuel 3:18). Eli was a very weak man, a wimp.

As Samuel grew Jehovah would speak to him, and he would speak to all Israel. Sometime later Israel went out to fight the Philistines, but they were defeated. Then the elders decided to get the ark of the covenant of Jehovah from Shiloh. They were going to take it with them to battle. They thought it would save them, but it did not. They were defeated again. The Philistines even captured the ark of God, and killed the two sons of Eli. When a soldier came and told Eli, he fell backward, broke his neck, and died. The book says he was ninety-eight years old. He had judged Israel forty years.

The Philistines took the ark of God to their city of Ashdod. And they brought it into the house of their god Dagon. However, their idol kept falling down in the night to the ark. Jehovah also caused everybody there to have tumors. So they sent the ark to another city, and they also got tumors. They were going to send it to a third city, but those people protested. They said, **“They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people”** (1st Samuel 5:10). They told the lords of the Philistines to send it back to Israel. Their priests and psychics also advised sending a gift with it. They warned them not to harden their hearts as Pharaoh had done.

So they prepared a new cart to carry the ark of God. And to pull it they used two milk cows that normally would not want to leave their calves. The book says the cows went straight to a city of the sons of Israel, mooing as they went. And the lords of the Philistines followed behind them to the border. Those of the city were reaping their wheat harvest. And when they saw the ark, they rejoiced. The Levites took down the ark of Jehovah. Then they split the wood of the cart, and offered the cows for a burnt offering.

Samuel was judge of Israel after Eli. His home was in Ramah where he was born. That was six miles from Jerusalem, and he built an altar to Jehovah there. When Samuel was old he made his sons judges. However, they did not walk in his ways. They took bribes and perverted justice. So the elders of Israel went to Samuel to his home at Ramah. They said he was old, and his sons were not like

him. Then they said, “**Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations**” (1st Samuel 8:5).

Samuel was not happy about that, and he prayed to Jehovah. Jehovah told Samuel to listen to them. He told Samuel they had not rejected him. He said they had rejected Jehovah from being king over them. He told Samuel they had done that ever since he brought them up out of Egypt. He told Samuel to protest their request, and warn them how oppressive and expensive a king would be.

Nevertheless, the people insisted on having a king. They wanted to be like all the nations. Then Jehovah told Samuel to make a king for them. So Samuel told them to return to their homes. Then Jehovah chose a man named Saul for their king. And Samuel presented him to all the people. The book says there was no man of Israel who was better looking than he was. And he was taller than any of the people.

Sometime later Nahash the Ammonite came against a city of Israel. The men of that city asked for a peace treaty, and they would serve him. However, Nahash said only if all their right eyes were put out. When Saul heard about it the Spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he became very angry. He took a yoke of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent them all over Israel. The messengers who carried them said, “**Whoever does not come forth behind Saul and behind Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen**” (1st Samuel 11:7). Therefore, the fear of Jehovah came upon the people, and they came. There were 330,000 men, and they utterly defeated the Ammonites.

The book says Saul was forty years old when he began to reign. And he chose several thousand men for him. He divided them between himself and his son Jonathan. When Jonathan attacked a Philistine garrison, Saul and the Philistines assembled for war. The Philistines had a large powerful army. So the men of Israel hid in places like caves and thickets. Some even crossed the Jordan river to get away from the Philistines, but Saul remained in Gilgal waiting for Samuel.

When Samuel was late coming the people began leaving him. Then Saul offered the burnt offering himself. Saul had no right to do that. After Samuel arrived he told Saul he had done foolishly. Samuel said because of it his kingdom would not continue. Then Samuel left, and Saul counted six hundred men who remained with him.

The book says there was no blacksmith in all Israel. That was because the Philistines were afraid they would make weapons. So none of the sons of Israel who came for the battle had a sword or a spear, except for Saul and Jonathan. One day Jonathan and the young man who carried his armor left his father's camp. Jonathan said to the young man, **“Come, and let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that Jehovah will work for us, for there is no limitation to Jehovah to save by many or by few”** (1st Samuel 14:6).

So they went and killed about twenty men. Then the book says there was an earthquake, and a great trembling. Saul's men saw the Philistines scatter. So he and his army came to the battle. And they saw all the Philistines attacking each other in great confusion. Then all the Hebrews joined in the battle. And the book says Jehovah saved Israel that day.

Although the men of Israel won the battle, they were troubled, because Saul did a foolish thing. He uttered a curse against any man who ate anything that day. There was a lot of honey on the ground in the forest, but no man ate because they were afraid. Jonathan had not heard about it, so he ate. Then one of the people told Jonathan what his father said. Jonathan said his father prevented a great victory because of that. Later Saul discovered that Jonathan had eaten something, and he was going to kill him. However, the people would not let Saul do it because they gave Jonathan credit for their great victory.

The book says that Saul fought victoriously against all of Israel's enemies. Then Jehovah told Samuel to send Saul on a mission. Jehovah wanted him to go against Amalek. Jehovah remembered how the Amalekites caused trouble for Israel when they came out of Egypt. Jehovah said, **“Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey”** (1st Samuel 15:3). So Saul summoned the people—210,000 men—and went to attack the city of Amalek. He destroyed all the people, but he kept Agag the king alive. And he brought back the best of the livestock, and everything that was good.

Then Jehovah spoke to Samuel, and said Saul disobeyed him. The Lord said he was sorry he had made him king. Samuel was angry with Saul, and the next morning he went out to meet him. When Saul came he told Samuel that he had obeyed Jehovah's command. However, Samuel told him he had not, and he rebuked

Saul. He said Jehovah sent him on a mission to **“utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites”** (1st Samuel 15:18).

Saul insisted he had been obedient. He said the people took the chief things to sacrifice to Jehovah. Samuel replied, **“Has Jehovah as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”** (1st Samuel 15:22). Then he told Saul that because he had rejected the word of Jehovah, God had rejected him from being king.

Saul finally admitted he had sinned. He said he was afraid of the people, and obeyed their voice. Then he asked Samuel to pardon his sin, and go with him to worship. Samuel did not want to go, but he finally did. Then Samuel called for Agag the king, and said, **“As thy sword has made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women”** (1st Samuel 15:33). Then he hacked him to pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal, and went to his home in Ramah.

The book says that Samuel came no more to see Saul, but he mourned about him. Then Jehovah told him to take oil, and go to Jesse at Bethlehem. God had chosen one of his sons to be king. Samuel said if Saul heard about it he would kill him. So Jehovah told him to take a heifer for a sacrifice. That way Saul would not suspect anything. When he called Jesse to the sacrifice, Jehovah would show him the one to anoint.

Therefore, Samuel went, and he called for Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice. When Samuel saw Jesse’s first son he thought he was the one. But Jehovah said to him, **“Do not look on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For Jehovah sees not as man sees, for man looks on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looks on the heart”** (1st Samuel 16:7).

Jesse brought seven of his sons, but Jehovah did not choose any of them. Then Samuel asked Jesse if those were all of his sons. Jesse said there was yet the youngest (David), who was keeping the sheep. So he sent for him. When he came the book says that he was ruddy and good looking. Then Jehovah told Samuel to anoint him, for he was the one. After that Samuel returned to his home in Ramah.

The Spirit of Jehovah left Saul, and he sent an evil spirit to afflict him. Saul’s servants recommended getting a musician who might make him well. David was a skilled musician. He eventually

wrote many of the psalms of the Bible. So they brought David to play for him whenever the evil spirit came. His music made Saul feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

Next the book tells the story of David and Goliath. The Philistine army stood on one side of the mountain, and the men of Israel stood on the other side. Their champion Goliath was about ten feet tall. And he stood and cried out to the men of Israel. He challenged any one of them to a duel. He said whoever won would decide which nation would rule the other. When he said this all Israel was distressed and fearful. The book says Goliath did this every morning and evening for forty days.

Jesse told his son David to take some food for his brothers in the army, and see how they were. When David arrived at the camp he came to his brothers. While he spoke with them Goliath came out and made his challenge. David asked the people, **“What shall be done to the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”** (1st Samuel 17:26). Throughout his life David had great faith in God, and love for him. He only committed one great sin in his life, but it was a terrible one.

Saul heard what David was saying, and he sent for him. David told him he would go and fight the Philistine. Saul said he was not able to go, for he was only a youth. Then David told Saul how he had killed lions and bears who came after his flock. And he said that uncircumcised Philistine would be like one of them. David said, **“Jehovah who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine”** (1st Samuel 17:36). David was a strong young man at that time, and not a mere boy as is commonly portrayed.

Saul wanted David to wear armor, but he was not used to it. All he took was his staff, five smooth stones from the brook, and his sling. Then he came near the Philistine. When the Philistine came near and saw David, he said, **“Am I a dog, that thou come to me with sticks?”** (1st Samuel 17:43). And he cursed David by his gods. He told David he would feed his flesh to the vultures and the beasts of the field.

David said Goliath came with weapons, but he came in the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. David said Jehovah would make him the winner. He said he was going to kill Goliath **“that all the earth**

**may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that Jehovah saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you into our hand"** (1st Samuel 17:47).

Then David took out a stone from his bag, and struck the Philistine in his forehead. David had thrown the stone in his sling with such speed that it plunged into Goliath's forehead like a bullet. So Goliath fell down on his face. Then David drew Goliath's sword, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw it, they fled. Then the men of Israel arose with a shout, and attacked the Philistines. After they returned from the battle they plundered their camp.

The book says that Saul's son Jonathan loved David as his own soul. Jonathan also made a covenant with David. And he gave him clothes and weapons. David behaved himself wisely, and Saul set him over the men of war. When they returned from fighting with the Philistines the women would come out to meet them. And they sang and danced with musical instruments. They sang, "**Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands**" (1st Samuel 18:7). That made Saul angry, and he became suspicious of David after that. Saul even threw a spear at him while he was playing music for him. However, the book says all Israel loved David.

Saul kept trying to kill David, so he finally had to flee. He went to Samuel's home in Ramah, and told him everything. Saul tried to have him killed there also. David fled again, and came to Jonathan. He asked why his father wanted to kill him. Jonathan did not believe it was so. However, he said he would do what David wanted. Therefore, David told him how he wanted Jonathan to test Saul. So Jonathan went to his father Saul. However, Saul raged at him for being David's friend. He even threw a spear at Jonathan when he asked what David had done wrong.

Then Jonathan went back to David. And they kissed each other, and wept about it. Jonathan returned to the city, but David went to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech gave him bread when he asked for it. He also gave him the sword of Goliath. David moved around from place to place. About four hundred men joined him. He also took his father and mother to Moab to live, for fear of Saul.

Sometime later Saul complained to his men that none of them felt sorry for him about David. Then Doeg the Edomite told him about David and Ahimelech the priest. Saul took his army there, and accused Ahimelech of treason. Ahimelech said he thought

David was his servant. Nevertheless, Saul killed him and eighty-five priests. The book says, “**And Nob, the city of the priests, he smote with the edge of the sword, both men and women, sons and sucklings, and oxen and donkeys and sheep, with the edge of the sword**” (1st Samuel 22:19). However, Abiathar one of the sons of Ahimelech escaped. He fled to David, and he told him what Saul had done. David felt guilty for having gone to Ahimelech, but Saul was the guilty man.

David and his men went around wherever they could to avoid Saul. The book says that Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. David often asked Jehovah about what to do. One time when Saul was pursuing David he went in a cave to relieve himself. However, David and his men were hiding there. So David crept up and cut a piece off the skirt of Saul’s robe. Then after Saul went back to his army David shouted out, and told Saul he could have killed him. Saul said he was sorry for chasing him, and he stopped for a while.

After that the book says Samuel died, and all Israel gathered to mourn and bury him. Then it tells about a man named Nabal who had large flocks and herds. His wife’s name was Abigail. She was wise and beautiful, but Nabal was an evil fool. David had protected his flocks and herds. So he sent messengers to ask for some food. Nabal refused, and sent them away empty handed. David was so insulted that he was going to attack him. However, one of the young men told Abigail what Nabal had done. He said, “**For he is such a worthless fellow that a man cannot speak to him**” (1st Samuel 25:17).

Then Abigail rushed to prepare much food. And she placed it on donkeys to take with her to David. When she came to him, she apologized, and begged his forgiveness. She said she did not want him to do anything he would later regret. She said she knew he was going to rule Israel, and she asked him to remember her. When David heard, he blessed Jehovah, and blessed her for coming.

When Abigail came back, Nabal was holding a feast, and was very drunk. When she told him everything the next morning, the book says, “**... his heart died within him, and he became as a stone**” (1st Samuel 25:37). And after ten days he died. When David heard of it, he blessed Jehovah again for keeping him from doing evil. Then he sent servants to Abigail to take her for a wife. David also took another woman for a wife.

Saul was again told where David was hiding, so he took 3,000 men to seek him. David discovered that Saul was coming. And one night he and a man named Abishai went into Saul's camp while they slept. Saul lay near his spear, which was stuck in the ground. David told Abishai to take Saul's spear and the pot of water near him. Then they left. None in the camp awoke because Jehovah kept them asleep.

When David was on the other side of the mountain, he cried out to Saul's men. He asked Abner, captain of Saul's army, to look for the king's spear and the pot of water. When Saul heard David, he said he would not harm him because he spared his life. Then Saul said, "**Behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly**" (1st Samuel 26:21). Saul blessed David, and they both departed. However, David was still afraid Saul would try to kill him. Saul had become an evil man, not to be trusted.

Sometime later the Philistines and the Israelites gathered again for war. The Philistines defeated Israel in the battle, and they killed Saul's sons. Saul was also severely wounded by the archers. Therefore, he told his armor bearer to kill him, lest he be captured alive and abused. When the armor bearer refused, Saul fell upon his sword and killed himself. Then his armor bearer also killed himself. After that, many of the men of Israel forsook their cities, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

When the Philistines came to strip the slain the day after the battle, they found Saul and his three sons. They cut off his head, and put his armor in the house of one of their gods. They also fastened his body to the wall of one of their cities. However, some courageous sons of Israel went at night, and recovered his body and the bodies of his sons. Then they returned, buried them, and fasted seven days.

### A Description of **Second Samuel**

After the death of Saul, David asked Jehovah if he should go back into Judah. Jehovah said yes, to go to Hebron in Judah. So David and his men brought all of their families there. Then the men of Judah came and anointed David king over them. Abner was the captain of Saul's army. And he made Saul's son Ish-bosheth king over Israel. Ish-bosheth was forty years old, and he reigned two years. David reigned over Judah seven years and six months.

There was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. David grew stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker. Six sons were born to David in Hebron, one from each of six wives he had there. A time came when Ish-bosheth angered Abner. So Abner said he was going to transfer the kingdom to David. Ish-bosheth gave no answer because he was afraid of Abner. Abner sent messengers to David. And they told David that Abner would give all Israel to him if he would make a treaty with Abner. Then Abner told the elders of Israel to make David king.

Abner and some other men also went to meet David. David made a feast for them, and sent them away in peace. Joab was the captain of David's army, and he heard Abner had been there. So he went out and killed Abner because he had killed his brother Asahel in a battle. When David heard it, he uttered a curse against Joab and his house. And he commanded Joab to mourn for Abner.

After that two officers in Ish-bosheth's army murdered him in his house. When David learned of it he had them killed. Then all the tribes of Israel came to David wanting him to be king over them. David was thirty years old when he first became king, and he reigned forty years.

Israel had never conquered all of Jerusalem. Therefore, David and his men went against the Jebusites there. However, they ridiculed him, saying, **“Unless thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shall not come in here”** (2nd Samuel 5:6). That probably means they thought their city could not be conquered; even blind and lame soldiers could defend it. Nevertheless, the book says, **“David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David”** (2nd Samuel 5:7). He told whoever was willing, to go up the watercourse to smite the lame and the blind. The watercourse was a subterranean passage into the city. Therefore, he took the stronghold and dwelt in it. And he made Jerusalem the capital city of Israel. David kept growing greater because Jehovah was with him.

Hiram king of Tyre sent men and materials to build David a house. David also took more wives and concubines after he came to Jerusalem. And he had eleven children that were born to him there. When the Philistines heard that David was king over all Israel they came to look for him. So David asked Jehovah if he should go against them. Jehovah told him to go, and he would deliver them into his hand. Therefore David went and defeated the Philistines. They left their images behind, and David took them away.

However, the Philistines came back in a valley a few miles south of Jerusalem. David again asked Jehovah, and he told him not to go up, but to circle behind them. And when he heard their sound in the trees he was to attack. **“For then,”** the book says, **“Jehovah has gone out before thee to smite the army of the Philistines”** (2nd Samuel 5:24). David did as Jehovah commanded him, and he smote them for about twenty miles.

Then David went with his people to bring up the ark of God. They set it upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab. The sons of Abinadab, Uzzah and Ahio, drove the cart. David and all Israel were bringing the ark of Jehovah with a great musical parade. However, Uzzah took hold of the ark because the oxen stumbled. So the anger of Jehovah was aroused against him to strike him dead. The book says David was unhappy about it, and afraid of Jehovah that day. He said, **“How shall the ark of Jehovah come to me?”** (2nd Samuel 6:9). And he carried it to the house of Obed-edom instead of bringing it to Jerusalem.

It was in the house of Obed-edom three months, and Jehovah blessed him and all his house. When David heard it, he went to bring the ark of God into the city of David with joy. On the way back David danced before Jehovah with all his might. The book says, **“So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet”** (2nd Samuel 6:15). David set up the ark of Jehovah in the tent he had pitched for it. He also made sacrifices before Jehovah, and blessed the people in the name of Jehovah. Then he gave all the people something to eat, and they went to their houses.

After Jehovah had given David peace he went to Nathan the prophet. David said he lived in a house of cedar, but the ark of God was in a tent. Nathan told David to do what was in his heart because Jehovah was with him. That very night Jehovah told Nathan what to say to David. Jehovah said he had dwelt in a tent since the sons of Israel came out of Egypt. And he never asked why they had not built him a house of cedar.

He said to remind David that he had been a shepherd, but Jehovah made him prince over his people Israel. And he said he had been with him wherever he went. Jehovah said he would make him a great name. He also said he would establish his house (meaning a dynasty) forever. Jesus was a descendent of David, and he is the fulfillment of that promise, for he is the eternal King. Nathan told all the words of the vision to David. Then David went in, and

prayed to Jehovah. He praised him and thanked him.

After that the book tells about some of David's victories over other countries. David dedicated to Jehovah much of the silver, gold, and bronze he took in war. The book says, "**And Jehovah gave victory to David wherever he went. And David reigned over all Israel. And David executed justice and righteousness to all his people**" (2nd Samuel 8:14-15). It also names some of his chief men.

Sometime later the king of the sons of Ammon died, and his son took his place. David sent his servants to comfort him because his father had been kind to David. However, the rulers of the sons of Ammon accused them of being spies. Therefore, the new king shaved off half their beards, cut off their garments at the buttocks, and sent them away greatly ashamed. Then they hired the Syrians to help them fight.

When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the mighty men. Joab and his brother Abishai defeated the sons of Ammon and the Syrians. The Syrians came back later, but were defeated again. After that the Syrians were afraid to help the sons of Ammon any more. Then David sent Joab to destroy the sons of Ammon, and besiege their city of Rabbah. However, David remained in Jerusalem. Rabbah is now the capital of Jordan.

Next the book tells the story of David and Bathsheba the wife of Uriah. It says David looked from the roof of the king's house, and saw a very beautiful woman bathing. When David asked about her, they said she was Bathsheba the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Then David sent for her, and committed adultery with her. She went back to her house, but later she sent and told him she was going to have a baby.

Therefore, David told Joab to send Uriah back to him. When Uriah came David tried to get him to go to his wife to bed with her. However, he would not do it while his comrades were still out fighting. David should have confessed, and begged his forgiveness. Instead, he plotted to have him killed. So in the morning David sent a letter by Uriah to Joab. In the letter he told Joab to arrange for Uriah to be killed in battle. After Uriah the Hittite died David took Bathsheba for his wife, and she bore him a son.

The Bible says, "**But the thing that David had done displeased Jehovah**" (2nd Samuel 11:27). And he sent the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan told him about a rich man and a poor man

in a city. The rich man had many animals, but the poor man had only one little female lamb. The lamb grew up with him, and lived with him like a daughter. A traveler came to visit the rich man, and he cooked the poor man's lamb for him instead of one of his own. When David heard the story he was very angry against the rich man. He said he was worthy of death because he had no pity.

Nathan said to David, "**Thou are the man**" (2nd Samuel 12:7). Then he told him what Jehovah said. Jehovah said he had anointed him king, and had saved him from Saul. Jehovah said he gave him much. And if that had been too little, he would have added other things. Then he said because he had killed Uriah the Hittite, the sword would never depart from his house. Jehovah said he would bring evil against him. He said he would give his wives to his neighbor, and everybody in Israel would know it.

David confessed to Nathan that he had sinned. Nathan told him that Jehovah had put away his sin. That meant he would not die. However, the child that was born would die. He said to David, "**... by this deed thou have given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme**" (2nd Samuel 12:14). After the child died David comforted Bathsheba his wife. Later she bore a son whom he called Solomon. And the book says that Jehovah loved Solomon.

Next the book tells about some of the evils that David suffered because of his sin. It first tells the story of rape and murder in his family. Absalom, a son of David, had a pretty sister named Tamar. And Amnon another son of David raped her. David was very angry when he heard about it. However, the book does not say he did anything. Two years later Absalom found a way to kill Amnon away from David. After he killed him, he fled to king Talmai in Syria, and was there three years. Talmai was the father of his mother. After a while David said he could come back.

However, the book tells how Absalom tried to destroy David and take the throne. Absalom was a very proud man. He prepared a chariot and horses with fifty men to run in front of him. He would also rise up early to stand beside the gate. And he would greet every man who had a case to bring to David for judgment. He would tell them if he were judge, he would give them justice. And whenever any man approached him, he would take the man and kiss him. Today we would say he was a master politician. As a result, the book says, "**So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel**" (2nd Samuel 15:6).

Then Absalom prepared to take the throne from his father David. He sent spies throughout Israel to gather men behind him. He also sent for Ahithophel, David's counselor. As the conspiracy grew, a messenger came to David, and said, "**The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom**" (2nd Samuel 15:13). So David took all his servants and fled quickly. He did not want Absalom to attack Jerusalem with the sword. David only left behind ten of his concubines to keep the house. The book says everyone wept loudly as they were going away.

Zadok the priest came to him with the Levites carrying the ark of the covenant of God. However, David told him to take it back to the city. He also wanted Zadok to keep him informed. So Zadok and Abiathar the other priest brought the ark of God back to Jerusalem. The book says David went up by the mount of Olives. And he wept, going barefoot with his head covered. And all the people with him went weeping with their heads covered. David was afraid of the counsel of Ahithophel, so he prayed that Jehovah would turn it into foolishness.

On the way Hushai the Archite met him. He was also mourning, with his coat torn, and dirt on his head. David told him to go back to the city, and tell Absalom he would serve him. That way he could defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. David also told him to keep Zadok and Abiathar the priests informed. They would send the information to David by their two sons. So Hushai returned and met Absalom in Jerusalem.

When Absalom came to Jerusalem, Hushai said he was joining him. Then Absalom asked Ahithophel for his counsel. Ahithophel told Absalom to bed with his father's concubines, the ones he left behind. He said that would show all Israel that David hated him. And that would strengthen Absalom's supporters. Therefore, Absalom raped the ten concubines of his father David. All of those evils in David's family were a consequence of his sin with Bathsheba. Jehovah had protected him from things like that before he sinned.

The book says the counsel of Ahithophel was highly respected. People considered it like asking from the word of God. Ahithophel also advised how to attack David. He wanted 12,000 men to pursue David immediately while he was weary and weak. He said the people with him would scatter, and he would only kill the king. Absalom and all the elders of Israel liked that advice. However, Absalom called for Hushai to hear his counsel.

Hushai said, **“The counsel that Ahithophel has given this time is not good”** (2nd Samuel 17:7). He warned Absalom that his father and the men with him were mighty men. They were like a bear robbed of her cubs. And he said David knew how to hide. Hushai told Absalom to gather all Israel together in a great multitude. Then he should lead them in person to overwhelm David. Absalom and all the men of Israel said Hushai’s counsel was better than Ahithophel’s. The book says, **“For Jehovah had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that Jehovah might bring evil upon Absalom”** (2nd Samuel 17:14).

Hushai then told everything to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. And they sent their two sons to carry the message to David. When they informed David, they warned him to cross the Jordan quickly. So by morning they had all crossed over. When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he went home and hanged himself.

David came to Mahanaim, a city on the eastern side of the Jordan. Later Absalom crossed the Jordan with all his men to attack David. He had set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. David divided his troops into three groups. One was led by Joab, one by Joab’s brother Abishai, and one by Ittai the Gittite. When he told the people he was going with them, they would not let him. They said he was too valuable for them. So he stood by the gate-side. He commanded his three captains to deal gently with Absalom, and all the people heard what he said.

After the battle began the people of Israel were defeated by the servants of David. Now Absalom happened to have his head caught in the thick branches of a great oak tree. He was left hanging in midair while his donkey went out from under him. A certain man told Joab. So Joab went with his ten armor bearers, and they killed Absalom. Then Joab blew the trumpet, and his troops returned from pursuing Israel.

After that Joab sent a messenger to David, telling him of the death of Absalom. When the king heard, he went to his chamber and wept. As he was going he cried out with a loud voice, saying, **“O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”** (2nd Samuel 18:33).

The book says the victory that day was turned into mourning because the king grieved for his son. Joab was told about it, and so he went to David. He criticized David, and said he had shamed his servants who saved his life. He said if David did not go out and

speak graciously to his servants, none would be left to him. And that would be worse than anything he had suffered in his lifetime. David listened to him, and he went out and sat in the gate. Then all the people came to him.

When the king came to Gilgal the men of Israel had an argument with the men of Judah. Consequently, all the men of Israel quit following David. Instead, they followed a sleazy man named Sheba. However, the men of Judah remained loyal to him. David was afraid Sheba was going to do them more harm than Absalom. So he told Abishai to take men, and pursue Sheba lest he escape. Abishai took Joab with him. Sheba had entered a city in the far north of Israel. They besieged the city, and cast up a mound against it. And all the people with Joab were battering the wall.

Then a wise woman in the city cried out for Joab. When he came near, she said they were a peaceable and faithful people. She asked Joab why he wanted to swallow up and destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Joab said it was far from him to swallow up or destroy. He was after Sheba, who had lifted up his hand against the king. If he was delivered, Joab said he would leave the city. The woman told Joab the man's head would be thrown out to him. And in her wisdom she persuaded all the people of the city to behead Sheba. Therefore, Joab blew the trumpet, and every man went to his home.

Then the book names the mighty men of David, and tells a little about what they did. For example, three of the chief men went to David when he was in the stronghold. The Philistines had a garrison in Bethlehem. David told his men that he longed for a drink of water from the well there. So the three mighty men broke through the army of the Philistines. And they brought back water from the well. However, David poured it out on the ground. He said he would not drink it because they risked their lives for it.

### A Description of **First Kings**

When king David was very old his son Adonijah attempted to become king. Like Absalom, he was a proud man. He also prepared chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run ahead of him. And David never questioning what he did. The book says that he too was a very handsome man.

Joab and Abiathar the priest helped Adonijah. However, Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet did not join him. Neither did

Benaiah nor David's mighty men. Adonijah held a great feast anyway. And he called all his brothers to it except for Solomon. He also called all the men of Judah.

David had earlier promised Bathsheba that her son Solomon would be king after him. Therefore, Nathan told her what Adonijah did. And he advised her what she should do. Then she went and told David what was happening. Immediately after she left, Nathan came to David, and asked him if he had commanded it. So king David promised Bathsheba that Solomon would sit on his throne that very day.

Then he called for Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah. He told them to take his servants, and cause Solomon to ride upon David's mule. And they were to take him and anoint him king publicly. Then they were to blow the trumpet, and say, "**Live, king Solomon**" (1st Kings 1:34). And Solomon was to come and sit upon his throne. Therefore, Solomon was anointed king as David commanded. And all the people followed along with a musical parade rejoicing with great joy. After that David slept with his fathers, and was buried in Jerusalem. He had reigned over Israel forty years.

The book says that Solomon loved Jehovah and was obedient. Sometime later Solomon went to the high place at Gibeon where he offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar. While he was there Jehovah appeared to him in a dream at night. In that vision God said, "**Ask what I shall give thee**" (1st Kings 3:5). Solomon said he was king, yet he felt like a little child. So he said, "**Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to judge this thy great people?**" (1st Kings 3:9).

The book says Jehovah was pleased Solomon had asked for that. And he told Solomon he would give him more wisdom than any man had before, or would have afterward. He also said he would give him riches and honor. And he said he would give him long life if he was obedient like David. When Solomon awoke he went back to Jerusalem and offered sacrifices there.

Sometime later two harlots came to him with a dispute. They each had a baby, but one of them died. And each woman claimed the living child was hers. Therefore, Solomon ordered the living child be cut in two pieces, one for each woman. One woman pleaded with Solomon to give the child to the other woman, and not

kill it. But the other woman said to divide it. Then Solomon commanded the child be given to the woman who pleaded for its life. He said she was the mother of it. The book says, **“And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged. And they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do justice”** (1st Kings 3:28).

Next the book tells about Solomon’s power and glory and wisdom. It says his wisdom was world famous. It says, **“And he spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five”** (1st Kings 4:32). Only six hundred of his proverbs are in the Bible. It also says, **“And he spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of creeping things, and of fishes”** (1st Kings 4:32-33). That means he had much knowledge of natural science as well.

Then the book tells about Hiram king of Tyre. He supplied Solomon with timber and some men to help build the house of God, the temple. In return Solomon sent him wheat and oil. Solomon also drafted thousands of men to build the temple.

The basic part of the temple was twice the size of the tabernacle. And it had porches, side-chambers, and windows. The structure was made of stone, and all of the parts of it were prefabricated. All they did in Jerusalem was put them together. The walls were covered with cedar inside and out, and the floor was covered with fir.

The whole inside was overlaid with gold. There were two cherubim of olive-wood in the oracle. That was the most holy place where the ark of the covenant was kept. Each one was about fifteen feet high. They stood beside each other with their wings spread out. So that together their wings went from wall to wall. Remember, the cherubim were like awesome looking guards for the ark. The cherubim were also overlaid with gold. All the walls had carvings of cherubim and palm trees and flowers.

King Solomon laid the foundation of the house of Jehovah in his fourth year as king. And in his eleventh year it was finished. Thus, it took seven years to build the temple. The book says that Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house. It was larger than the temple. However, the inside was not overlaid with gold. It also had windows and porches. One area was like a courtroom where he would sit as judge. It was probably a combination office building and dwelling, like the White House in our capital city.

King Solomon also sent for another man named Hiram from Tyre. That Hiram was the son of a Hebrew woman and a man of Tyre. He was a workman in bronze. He made two pillars of molten bronze. Each one was about thirty feet high with ornate capitals on top. The capitals were about eight feet high. The pillars were set up in front of the porch of the temple. He made a huge bowl-shaped tank for water called the sea. He also made ten very large wagons for water. They all had beautiful decorations built into them. Hiram also made all the utensils needed, like pots and shovels. Those things were all of bronze, but the furniture inside the house of Jehovah was gold. Hiram probably did not make anything inside the temple, for they were the most sacred items.

When all the work of the temple was finished, Solomon brought the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. The priests placed the ark in the most holy place under the wings of the cherubim. The ark of the covenant was the most sacred object of the Israelites. The two tablets of stone were in it. Remember, they had the ten commandments written on them. The most important thing about the ark was the ten commandments. Yet they honored the box and the stones instead of the commandments. When the priests came out the cloud filled the temple. The Bible says it was the glory of Jehovah.

Then Solomon blessed the assembly. He told them how David wanted to build the house, but Jehovah said Solomon should do it. Then Solomon got on his knees before the altar. He spread forth his hands toward heaven and prayed. It was a lengthy prayer, taking about a page and a half in a typical modern Bible. Solomon spoke of the glory of Jehovah. He asked him to keep his promise to David about the throne. He also asked Jehovah to answer the prayers of anyone who prayed there, including foreigners, and forgive them.

Then the king and all Israel offered sacrifices of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep before Jehovah. So the house of Jehovah was dedicated. After the feast he sent the people away. The book says the people had joyful and glad hearts for all the goodness Jehovah had shown.

After that Jehovah appeared to Solomon a second time. He said he heard his prayer. Jehovah told Solomon that if he remained faithful to him, as David his father had, he would establish his throne forever. Also he warned Solomon if he turned away and served other gods, he would cut off Israel out of the land. And Jehovah said he would cast away the house that he hallowed. It would even become a disgrace to them. It would be a sign to other peoples that

they had forsaken him for other gods.

The queen of Sheba had heard of Solomon's fame concerning the name of Jehovah. So she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very large caravan bringing treasures. Solomon answered all of her questions. And when she saw all the grandeur around him, the Bible says there was no more spirit in her. She said she had not believed the report about him. But now she had seen, and it was even more than she was told. She said, **"Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee to set thee on the throne of Israel. Because Jehovah loved Israel forever, therefore he made thee king, to do justice and righteousness"** (1st Kings 10:9). After exchanging much goods with the king, she returned to her own land.

Next the book tells of Solomon's gold. It also describes his magnificent throne, which was of ivory overlaid with gold. It also says that all the vessels were of gold. Silver was not used; it was as common as stones. He also accumulated horses and chariots. King Solomon also accumulated wives. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Many of them were women of the nations Jehovah warned the sons of Israel against. Jehovah said they would turn their hearts after other gods. And that is exactly what they did to Solomon.

Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. He built places for his wives to worship other gods. So Jehovah became angry toward him. Therefore, he told Solomon he was going to tear the kingdom from him, and give it to his servant. However, Jehovah said for David's sake he would wait until Solomon died.

Then Jehovah raised up enemies to Solomon who did mischief against him. One was Jeroboam, a mighty man of valor. A time came when the prophet Ahijah met him alone in a field. Ahijah tore his new garment into twelve pieces. And he told Jeroboam to take ten of them. He said Jehovah was going to tear the kingdom from Solomon, and give him ten tribes. He was going to do it because they had forsaken him for other gods. He told him God would do it after Solomon died. He also told Jeroboam that Jehovah would be with him if he was obedient like David had been. So Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt until Solomon was dead. All of Solomon's wisdom and other blessings did not keep him faithful to Jehovah.

The time came when Solomon died. He had reigned over Israel forty years. Rehoboam his son reigned in his place. Then all the people assembled to make Rehoboam king. And they told Rehoboam that his father had been too hard on them. They wanted him to lighten their load. Rehoboam told them to give him three days to think about it.

The old men advised Rehoboam to listen to the people. However, the young men told him to make their burdens heavier. Rehoboam took the advice of the young men, and so the people revolted. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin stayed with him. The division happened because Jehovah wanted it to.

Jeroboam was afraid the people would return to Solomon if they went to Jerusalem to worship. Therefore, he made two calves of gold. And he told Israel they were the gods that brought them out of Egypt. He set one near the southern border, and the other near the northern border. Jeroboam also made houses of worship in high places. And he made priests of men who were not Levites. He also ordained a different feast time.

One day while Jeroboam was worshiping on the southern altar, a man of God came out of Judah. He cried out against the altar. He said the priests who burned incense there would themselves be burned on it. And for proof, the altar would split apart, spilling its ashes. When the king heard it he ordered him to be taken. However, the hand he pointed with froze. Then the altar split, spilling the ashes. Jeroboam asked the man of God to pray for his hand. And when he did it was restored. Then Jeroboam invited him to come home and eat with him. However, the man of God said Jehovah commanded him not to eat or drink until he came home.

On his way back an old prophet met him. He said an agent of Jehovah told him to bring the man of God to his house to eat and drink. So the man of God went. However, the old prophet had lied to him. While they were at the table the word of Jehovah came to the old prophet. Jehovah told the man of God, because he had disobeyed him, he would not be buried with his fathers.

I believe Jehovah used the old prophet to test the man of God, and use him as an example for us, whether he passed or failed. That example teaches us to never accept the word of another man who claims God told him something that violates what God commanded us. Mohammed, founder of Islam, and Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, were both false prophets who have led millions of

souls astray. God stopped commanding men directly after the New Testament was written. Therefore, the Bible is our only safe guide for obedience to God. And it is deadly to our souls to listen to other men, no matter how convincing they may be, who claim knowledge of God's will not found in the Bible.

When the man of God departed he was met by a lion on the way. The lion killed him, and then stood with the donkey near the man's body. When the old prophet heard what happened, he went there. Then he put his body on the donkey to mourn and bury him. He even laid the body in his own grave, saying, "**Alas, my brother!**" (1st Kings 13:30). And he told his sons to bury him beside the man of God after he died.

The book says Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way. Then he died after reigning twenty-two years, and his son Nadab reigned in his stead. Rehoboam (the son of Solomon) began to reign in Judah when he was forty-one years old. He reigned seventeen years. He also did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. There were even sodomites in the land. Then in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of Jehovah and the king's house. Then Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried.

The book says Rehoboam's son Abijah reigned in Judah after him. He also did evil in the sight of Jehovah. After Abijah died, his son Asa reigned in his stead. He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. Then the book tells about five kings of Israel who reigned one after the other. All five of them did evil in the sight of Jehovah. Two of them even assassinated the kings who were before them.

The next king of Israel after those five was Ahab. He also did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. He even married Jezebel the daughter of the king of the Sidonians, and he served Baal. The book says, "**And Ahab did yet more to provoke Jehovah, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him**" (1st Kings 16:33). Then Elijah told Ahab to expect a drought. Only the word of Elijah would bring rain. After that Jehovah told Elijah to go to a certain place with a brook to drink from. Jehovah also said he commanded the ravens to feed him there. After a time, however, the brook dried up.

Jehovah told Elijah to go to a widow in Sidon. Jehovah said he had commanded her to support him. When he saw her he asked for

a morsel of bread she had. She told him all she had was a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the pot. She said she was going to prepare it for herself and her son to eat, and then die. Elijah told her not to fear, but to make a little cake for him first, then for herself and her son. He said neither the jar of meal nor the pot of oil would be used up until Jehovah sent rain. So she went and did as he said. And they all ate many days from the jar of meal and pot of oil as the word of Jehovah foretold. Her son died while he was there, but he prayed to God who brought him back to life.

In the third year of the drought Jehovah told Elijah to show himself to Ahab. When Ahab saw Elijah, he said, **“Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?”** (1st Kings 18:17). Elijah replied, **“I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou have followed the Baalim”** (1st Kings 18:18). Then he told Ahab to gather all Israel to him at mount Carmel. Elijah also told Ahab to bring the 450 prophets of Baal, and the 400 prophets of the Asherah.

After all the people and the prophets assembled, Elijah spoke to the people. He said if Jehovah is God, then follow him, but if Baal, then follow him. However, the people gave no answer. Then Elijah said, **“I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah, but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men”** (1st Kings 18:22). He told the prophets of Baal to bring two bullocks. They were to kill one bullock and lay it on wood with no fire. Then they were call upon their god. Elijah would do the same with the other one, calling upon Jehovah.

The book says they cried out for Baal from morning until noon, leaping about the altar. At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, **“Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is meditating, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he sleeps and must be awakened”** (1st Kings 18:27). The book says they cried aloud, cutting themselves till the blood gushed out on them, but nothing happened.

Then Elijah called all the people to come near him. He had much water (probably sea water) poured on his burnt offering. Then he prayed that Jehovah would turn the hearts of the people back again. When he said that, the fire of Jehovah (probably lightning) fell and consumed the burnt offering. The book says, **“And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces. And they said, Jehovah, he is God, Jehovah, he is God”** (1st Kings 18:39). Then Elijah took all the prophets of Baal and killed them. After that the heavens

grew black with clouds and wind, which brought a great rain.

Ahab went and told Jezebel everything. So she sent a messenger to tell Elijah he was going to die. Therefore, Elijah fled for his life, and came to Beersheba. That was almost a hundred miles south. He left his servant there, and went a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat under a juniper tree and prayed. He said, **"It is enough, now, O Jehovah, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers"** (1st Kings 19:4). Then he went to Horeb (Sinai) the mount of God.

Elijah stayed in a cave at Horeb. Then Jehovah asked what he was doing there. Elijah said, **"I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts. For the sons of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword. And I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away"** (1st Kings 19:10).

Jehovah sent a great wind, then an earthquake, then a fire, but Jehovah was not in any of those. After the fire there was a still small voice. Jehovah again asked him what he was doing there, and Elijah gave the same answer. Jehovah then told him to go and anoint three men. Two were to be kings, and one was Elisha to be prophet in his place. And Jehovah said to him, **"Yet I have reserved for me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which has not kissed him"** (1st Kings 19:18). So Elijah went to Elisha. After kissing his father and mother goodbye, Elisha went to serve Elijah.

Ahab wanted the vineyard of a man named Naboth because it was near his palace. However, Naboth said it would be wrong to sell his inheritance. So Ahab pouted and would not eat. Then his wife Jezebel thought of a scheme. She accused Naboth of cursing God and the king. Therefore, he was condemned to death by stoning. Then Ahab arose and took Naboth's vineyard.

However, Elijah told Ahab the dogs would lick his blood in the same place where they licked the blood of Naboth. And his household was going to be utterly swept away. When Ahab heard it he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and fasted. So Jehovah said because Ahab humbled himself he would wait until Ahab was dead to bring evil against his household.

A time came when Ahab king of Israel invited Jehoshaphat king of Judah. He wanted his help to capture a city. Ahab's four hundred prophets said they would have victory. However, Jehoshaphat

asked if there was not a prophet of Jehovah. The king of Israel said there was one named Micaiah, but he hated him because he never prophesied good to him, but evil.

When Micaiah came he said Jehovah would give the city to him. However, the king demanded to know the truth. So Micaiah said he saw Israel scattered as sheep without a shepherd. Then he told about a vision he had. He saw Jehovah sitting upon his throne in heaven, and all were standing around him. Jehovah asked who would entice Ahab to fall at the city. One said he would be a lying spirit in all his prophets. They would cause Ahab to go. Micaiah said Jehovah had spoken evil about him. So the king of Israel put him in prison.

Then the two kings went against the city. In the battle a certain archer shot an arrow at random. The arrow struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. He was severely wounded so that he died. The book says his blood ran into the bottom of the chariot. They buried the king, and the dogs licked up his blood as the prophet of Jehovah said they would. Then Ahaziah his son took his place.

## A Description of **Second Kings**

The first third of this book is mainly about the prophets Elijah and Elisha. They did their work for Jehovah in Israel (the ten northern tribes). The middle third tells about both Israel and Judah. However, it alternates from one to the other. That makes it harder to follow the story. So to make it easier for you, I divided the middle part into two sections. I first describe what it tells about Israel, then about Judah. Both countries were eventually conquered, and their people were carried away captive. However, the nation of Israel was destroyed about 130 years before Judah. So the last third of the book is only about Judah.

The book begins by saying that Ahaziah son of Ahab injured himself. Then he sent messengers to ask of Baal-zebub, a Philistine god, about his recovery. However, the agent of Jehovah told Elijah to send the messengers back. They were to tell Ahaziah he was going to die. So the messengers went back to him. When he asked why they returned, they told him what happened. Ahaziah then asked them what kind of man he was. They said he was a hairy man, wearing a leather belt. Ahaziah said he was Elijah.

Ahaziah sent fifty men with their captain to get him. Elijah was sitting on the top of the hill. And when the captain came he said, **“O man of God, the king has said, Come down”** (2nd Kings 1:9). Elijah told him if he were a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven to consume him and his fifty. And so it happened. Then the king sent another fifty, and the same thing happened to them. The king sent a third fifty. This time the captain fell on his knees, and pleaded with Elijah to spare their lives. The agent of Jehovah told Elijah not to fear going with him. Therefore, he went to the king. He told him the reason he would not recover was because he sent to ask of Baal-zebub. So he died and Jehoram began to reign in his place.

The time came when Jehovah was going to take Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven. However, Elijah first needed to travel to several places. Each time he started to go somewhere he told Elisha to wait for him. But Elisha would not leave him. Finally he came to the river Jordan. Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together. Then he struck the waters. When he did the waters separated, allowing him and Elisha to walk across on dry ground.

Elijah asked Elisha what he could do for him before he was taken. Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit. That meant twice as much special power. Elijah said he asked a hard thing. However, if he saw him taken, it would be to him. Then a chariot and horses of fire came, and took Elijah up by a whirlwind into heaven. Maybe it was like a helicopter. When Elisha saw it, he cried out, **“My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen of it!”** (2nd Kings 2:12).

After that Elisha used Elijah’s mantle to separate the Jordan to go back. And he began to do many miracles. There was a city with bad water and unfruitful ground. So he cast salt in the spring of waters, and said, **“Thus says Jehovah, I have healed these waters. There shall not be from there any more death or barren land”** (2nd Kings 2:21). And the waters were healed.

On his way to Bethel some young boys came out of the city and jeered him. They said, **“Go up, thou baldhead; go up, thou baldhead”** (2nd Kings 2:23). The book says Elisha called upon Jehovah to punish them. So two she-bears came out of the woods, and injured forty-two of them.

Elisha also helped a widow of the sons of the prophets. Her two children were going to be made slaves to pay for a debt. All she had

was a pot of oil. Elisha told her that the oil would fill all the containers she could borrow. So she borrowed all she could get. And after the last one was full, the oil halted. Then Elisha told her to sell the oil, pay the debt, and live on the rest.

Another miracle involved another woman. She had made a place for him to stay whenever he traveled to her city. He learned that she had no son. Therefore, he told her she would have one by the next year. However, after the child grew, he became sick and died. So the woman rushed to tell Elisha. When he came to the child, he prayed to Jehovah. And after laying upon the child he came back to life.

Another miracle was when there was a famine in the land. Elisha made pottage for the sons of the prophet to eat. However, one of them put things from a wild vine in the pot, which made it poisonous. When Elisha put meal in the pot, it was no longer poisonous.

On another occasion a man came and brought him twenty loaves of bread, and fresh ears of grain in a sack. Elisha told him to use it to feed the hundred men there. Elisha's servant said it was not enough for them. Elisha told him that Jehovah said they would all eat and leave some over. And it happened.

Next the book tells about how Naaman was healed. He was captain of the army of the king of Syria. He was a great man and honorable. He was great because Jehovah had used him to give victory to Syria. However, he was a leper. Now, the Syrians had gone out in bands to raid. One time they captured a little maiden from Israel, and she was made to wait on Naaman's wife. One day she said to her mistress, **"Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would heal him of his leprosy"** (2nd Kings 5:3).

The king of Syria was told what she said. So he sent Naaman with a letter to the king of Israel. Naaman left with many treasures. Then he gave the letter to the king of Israel. It told him to heal Naaman of his leprosy. When the king of Israel read it, he tore his clothes. And he said, **"Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends to me to heal a man of his leprosy?"** (2nd Kings 5:7). When Elisha heard of it, he asked the king why he tore his clothes. He told him to send the man to him, and he would know there was a prophet in Israel.

Then Naaman came with his horses and chariots. He stood at the door of Elisha's house, but Elisha did not even come out. He sent a

messenger to tell him to wash in the Jordan seven times to be healed. However, Naaman became angry and left. That was not what he expected. He said there were better rivers in Damascus. However, his servants urged him to do what he was told. Then he did, and was made clean. So he returned to the man of God. He told Elisha that he now knew there was no God except in Israel. And he offered Elisha his treasures, but Elisha refused to take anything.

However, after Naaman left, Gehazi decided to get something from him. Gehazi was the servant of Elisha. He went after Naaman, and invented a story about visitors needing some things. So Naaman gave to him. Gehazi tried to conceal it from Elisha, but Elisha knew. He told Gehazi it was not a time to receive gifts. Then he told Gehazi that the leprosy of Naaman would be on him and his children. Therefore, Gehazi went out a leper, white as snow.

Another miracle happened when the sons of the prophets were building places to live. The head of an axe they borrowed fell into the river. Elisha cut a stick, cast it in where it had fallen, and made the iron float.

There was a time when the king of Syria was warring against Israel. Whenever he went out, the man of God (Elisha) would warn the king of Israel. That way he saved him several times. However, the king of Syria asked his men which of them was the traitor warning Israel. They told him nobody. They said it was Elisha the prophet who tells the king all his secrets. So he sent a great army with horses and chariots to get Elisha. They came by night and surrounded the city where he was.

When the servant of the man of God arose that morning, he saw them and was afraid. However, Elisha said, **“Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them”** (2nd Kings 6:16). Then Elisha prayed that Jehovah would open his eyes. And his servant saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around them. Elisha also prayed that Jehovah would strike the Syrians with blindness. He first led them to the king of Israel, then he prayed Jehovah would open their eyes there. When the king asked Elisha if he should strike them, he said no. He told him to feed them, and sent them home. So the bands of Syria stopped coming into Israel.

However, sometime later Benhadad king of Syria came with his army. And they besieged Samaria. It caused a great famine there. It was so bad that people even paid a very high price for a donkey’s

head to eat. When the king of Israel learned that some mothers were eating their children, he became angry. He blamed Elisha for the famine, and he was going to take off his head. However, Elisha prophesied that the very next day bread flour would sell very cheap.

This is how it happened. There were four starving lepers outside the entrance of the city gate. They said they had nothing to lose by going to the army of the Syrians. So they went at twilight, and found no man in their camp. Jehovah had made the Syrians hear a noise of a great army. It made them think the king of Israel had hired other kings to fight them. Therefore they fled for their lives. And they left everything in their camp. The lepers reported it to the king's household. After the king investigated, the people rushed out and plundered the camp. And Elisha's prophecy was fulfilled.

Here is where I begin describing the events of Israel only.

Elisha told one of the sons of the prophets to go anoint Jehu king over Israel. So he went. After he anointed Jehu he told him that Jehovah said, **“And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of Jehovah, at the hand of Jezebel”** (2nd Kings 9:7). Then the men with Jehu blew the trumpet, and said Jehu was king.

Therefore, Jehu rode in his chariot to Jezreel where king Joram the son of Ahab was. Joram had been injured fighting the Syrians. And Ahaziah king of Judah was visiting him there. The watchman who stood on the tower of Jezreel saw the men coming. So Joram sent two horsemen to him, one after the other. He told them to ask if Jehu was coming in peace. When neither one of them returned, Joram and Ahaziah both went out in their chariots to meet Jehu. They met him in the field of Naboth. That was the man Jezebel had killed to get his vineyard for Ahab (see 1st Kings 21).

When Joram asked Jehu if he came in peace, he replied, **“What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?”** (2nd Kings 9:22). When Joram tried to flee, Jehu smote him with an arrow in his heart. Then he commanded him to be cast in Naboth's field. He said that was what Jehovah said would happen to him. When Ahaziah saw it, he also fled. However, Jehu followed, and commanded him to be smitten. So he also died, and his servants carried him to Jerusalem for burial.

When Jehu came to the gate of Jezreel, Jezebel looked out the

window. She accused him of murdering his master. However, Jehu looked up and asked who was on his side. When two or three eunuchs looked out, he told them to throw her down. So they did, and some of her blood splattered on the wall and the horses. Jehu also trampled her under foot. Then he went in, and ate and drank.

Afterward he commanded she be buried. However, they only found her skull, feet, and the palms of her hands. That was fulfillment of the word of Jehovah. He said she would be eaten by the dogs, and become as dung on the ground. Jehu also had the seventy sons of Ahab killed. The book says, **“So Jehu smote all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his familiar friends, and his priests, until he left to him none remaining”** (2nd Kings 10:11).

After that Jehu persuaded all the prophets, worshippers, and priests of Baal to gather together. He said he wanted to worship Baal. After they all went into the house of Baal, he commanded his men to kill them. Then he destroyed everything associated with Baal. However, he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam. He left the golden calves in Bethel and Dan. He did not walk in the law of Jehovah with all his heart. He continued in the sins of Jeroboam. Then Jehu slept with his fathers.

Next the book tells a little about the last nine kings of Israel. All of them did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. Indeed, four of the last five of them assassinated the kings who were before them. Then the king of Assyria came, conquered Israel, and carried the people away captive.

They were carried away captive because they had sinned so much against Jehovah their God. They became as bad as the nations Jehovah drove out before them. Jehovah had testified to them by every prophet and seer. He told them to turn from their evil, and obey his commandments. Yet they stiffened their necks, and would not listen. They made idols to worship, and burned their sons and daughters for sacrifices. Therefore, Jehovah let their enemies afflict them, and finally scatter them among the nations. And the king of Assyria brought people from other nations to live in their land. Only the nation of Judah was left.

Now I go back in the book and describe the events of Judah.

There was a time when both kings of Israel and Judah were named Joram (they were also called Jehoram). And they both did evil in the sight of Jehovah. Joram of Israel was the son of Ahab.

Joram of Judah married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab. When he died Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. Remember, Ahab also had a son named Ahaziah who reigned after him. All of that can be very confusing.

The mother of Ahaziah king of Judah was Athaliah. Ahaziah also did evil in the sight of Jehovah. Remember, Jehu killed him when he killed king Joram of Israel. When Athaliah saw that her son was dead, she killed all his heirs (all except one). That means she killed her own grandsons. She was very wicked like her father Ahab. Then she sat on the throne of Judah.

However, Ahaziah's sister was able to save his son Joash. He was hidden with his nurse in the house of Jehovah. Athaliah reigned six years. In her seventh year Jehoiada the priest decided to make Joash king. He arranged guards for protection while he anointed him king. When Athaliah saw what was happening, she said it was treason. However, Jehoiada the priest commanded her be taken out and slain.

Then Jehoiada the priest made a covenant that the king and all the people would be Jehovah's people. So all the people broke the altars, the images, and other things of Baal. Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah all the days of Jehoiada who instructed him. He also had the house of Jehovah repaired. However, the servants of Joash made a conspiracy and killed him. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

The next three kings of Judah were Amaziah son of Joash, Azariah (also called Uzziah) son of Amaziah, and Jotham son of Azariah. The book says all three did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. When Jotham slept with his fathers, Ahaz his son took his place. He did not do that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. He did according to the abominations of the nations Jehovah had cast out. When he slept with his fathers, Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. So Jehovah was with him and he prospered. However, a time came when the king of Assyria sent a great army against Jerusalem. And he demanded that Hezekiah surrender. The Assyrians told the Jews not to trust Hezekiah or Jehovah. They said none of the gods of other nations saved them. Hezekiah prayed for Jehovah to save them, and he sent men to Isaiah the prophet.

Isaiah told them Jehovah said not to fear those blasphemous words. He was going to cause Sennacherib, king of Assyria, to return to his own land, and be killed there. So one night Jehovah sent an agent from heaven to smite the camp of the Assyrians. In the morning there were 185,000 dead bodies. Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, and was slain while he worshiped in the house of his god.

Sometime later Hezekiah became sick, and Isaiah the prophet told him he was going to die. However, Hezekiah turned to the wall, and wept and prayed. So Jehovah told Isaiah to go back and tell Hezekiah he would give him fifteen more years.

After that some Babylonians visited Hezekiah, and he showed them all his valuable things. Afterward Isaiah told him Jehovah said everything was going to be carried away to Babylon. Moreover, his sons would be made eunuchs in the palace of their king. In response to that Hezekiah said to Isaiah, **“The word of Jehovah which thou have spoken is good. He said moreover, Is it not so, if peace and truth shall be in my days?”** (2nd Kings 20:19). Was that not very selfish? A man can do many righteous things, and yet be very selfish.

After Hezekiah slept with his fathers, Manasseh his son reigned in his place. He did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. He rebuilt the altars of Baal. He even built altars for other gods in the house of Jehovah, and set up an idol there. The book says Manasseh caused the people to do more evil than the nations that were before them.

When Manasseh slept with his fathers, Amon his son reigned in his place. He also did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. His servants conspired against him and killed him. However, the people killed all those in the conspiracy, and made Josiah his son king. Josiah did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. He also repaired the house of Jehovah.

Then they discovered the book of the law there. When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes. And he sent men to ask Jehovah about him and the people. He was afraid of God's anger. The king's servants went to Huldah the prophetess, and she told them the words of Jehovah. Jehovah said he was going to bring evil upon the place and its inhabitants, because they had forsaken him for other gods. However, king Josiah would not see all that evil, because he humbled himself, and wept when he heard the

warnings in the law.

Unlike Hezekiah, however, Josiah was not satisfied simply knowing he would be spared. He tried to save the people. Therefore, he gathered together the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem. And he read the words of the book of the covenant to all the people. He also made a covenant to obey Jehovah and all his commandments with all his heart and soul. And all the people said they would too. Josiah also destroyed the things of the other gods. However, after he died the people forsook Jehovah again.

There were four other kings who reigned in Judah after Josiah. And they all did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. Then the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon besieged Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar carried the last king and those who survived away captive. He left none but the poorest sort of people in the land. The Babylonians burnt all the great houses of Jerusalem, including the house of Jehovah and the king's house. And they broke down the walls of Jerusalem. Also all the objects of gold, silver, and bronze in the house of Jehovah were taken away.

God had warned the sons of Israel many times, but they ignored him. Therefore, their nation was destroyed, and most of the people were killed. The few survivors were scattered among other nations. Jehovah had warned them all those things would happen.

### A Description of **First Chronicles**

There are many lists in this book. Most of those in the first part of it are genealogies. And it uses the word son a lot. You need to remember that often the word son in the Bible means any male descendent.

The book first lists the ancestors of Noah and Abraham. Then it names Abraham's eight sons. One of them was Ishmael, and it names his twelve sons. Isaac was another son of Abraham. Israel came from Isaac. The book also names the sons of Esau. He was Israel's brother. Then it names the twelve sons of Israel. The book gives several pages (in a modern Bible) of their generations. Remember, the sons of Israel were the chosen people of God.

One of the sons of Israel was Levi. Moses and Aaron were both Levites. God chose all the Levites to do the service of the tabernacle, the house of God. However, the book says, **“But Aaron and his sons offered upon the altar of burnt offering, and upon the**

**altar of incense, for all the work of the most holy place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded”** (1st Chronicles 6:49). Therefore, Aaron and his sons were chosen apart from the other Levites.

The book gives many names of the descendents of each of the sons of Israel. Then it says, **“So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies. And, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. And Judah was carried away captive to Babylon for their transgression”** (1st Chronicles 9:1). After that the book names some of the chief men who returned to Judah from Babylonian captivity.

The rest of the book is about the reign of king David, but it also has many lists of names. David’s reign began after king Saul died fighting the Philistines. The book says that Jehovah killed Saul because of his sins against him. And he gave the kingdom to David. All Israel came to David at Hebron, and they anointed him king. Then David went to Jerusalem, conquered it, and made it the capital city. It was called the stronghold of Zion and the city of David. David had told whoever first smote the Jebusites in the city would be chief and captain. His nephew Joab went first, and so he was made chief. The book says, **“And David grew greater and greater, for Jehovah of hosts was with him”** (1st Chronicles 11:9).

David consulted with all the leaders about bringing up the ark of God. He also spoke to all the assembly about it, and they approved the idea. Therefore, David gathered them all together to bring up the ark of God. It had been at the house of Abinadab. They carried it on a new cart. Uzza and Ahio, Abinadab’s sons, drove the cart. The book says that David and all Israel played before God with all their might. They had a great parade with musical instruments.

However, on the way Uzza reached out his hand to the ark because the oxen stumbled. The book says, **“And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him because he put forth his hand to the ark. And there he died before God”** (1st Chronicles 13:10). It says that David was afraid of God that day. He said, **“How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?”** (1st Chronicles 13:12). So they carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. It remained there three months, and Jehovah blessed his house, and all that he had.

David took more wives at Jerusalem, and the book names thir-

teen children he had there. When the Philistines heard that he was anointed king over all Israel, they went to look for him. When they made a raid in a valley, David asked God if he should go up against them. Jehovah said go, and he would deliver them into his hand. So he went and smote them. Then David praised God for his victory. The Philistines left their gods behind, and David commanded to burn them.

When the Philistines made another raid in the valley, David again inquired of Jehovah. This time Jehovah told him not to go after them, but to come up opposite the mulberry trees. And when he heard the sound of marching in the tops of the trees, then to out to battle, for God was with him. Therefore, David did as God commanded, and he again smote the army of the Philistines.

The book says, **“And the fame of David went out into all lands. And Jehovah brought the fear of him upon all nations”** (1st Chronicles 14:17). David made houses for himself in the city of David. He also built a place for the ark of God, and a tent for it. Then he said that none should carry the ark of God except the Levites. And he assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring the ark of Jehovah to the place he had prepared.

He also gathered the sons of Aaron and the Levites. And he told them to sanctify themselves to bring up the ark of Jehovah. He reminded them what God had done because they had not sought him according to the law. They had used a cart to carry the ark of God instead of the Levites.

Next David made preparation for the parade. He told the chief of the Levites to appoint their brothers the singers and musicians for the joyful sound. Then they went to get the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. And the book says, **“Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psalteries and harps”** (1st Chronicles 15:28).

They brought the ark of God, and set it in the tent that David had pitched for it. David offering burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. Then he blessed the people in the name of Jehovah. And he gave every one of them, both man and woman, a loaf of bread, a portion of flesh, and a cake of raisins. The book also says, **“And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of Jehovah, and to celebrate and to thank and praise Jehovah, the God of Israel”** (1st Chronicles 16:4). Next the book gives

a psalm of praise to Jehovah. After those things all the people departed to their houses.

Sometime later David spoke to Nathan the prophet. He said he lived in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of God was under curtains. Nathan told him to do all in his heart because God was with him. That night the word of God came to Nathan to speak to David. Jehovah told David not to build a house for him. He said he had never asked why the people had not built him a house of cedar. Then he reminded David that he took him from following sheep to become the prince of his people Israel. He said he had been with him wherever he had gone. He also told him he would make a name for him like the name of the great ones on the earth. And he said that he was going to build David a house (meaning a dynasty). He said David's son would build a house for Jehovah.

When David heard those words, he went and prayed to Jehovah. He said, "**Who am I, O Jehovah God, and what is my house, that thou have brought me thus far?**" (1st Chronicles 17:16). David said Jehovah had done so much for him he did not know what to say. He praised Jehovah, saying there was none like him. And he asked Jehovah to fulfill his word about David and his house, to establish it forever. He also asked that Jehovah's name be established and magnified forever.

Next the book tells how David subdued the Philistines, the Moabites, and the Syrians. When David conquered king Hadarezer of Zobah (a region of Syria) he brought his shields of gold to Jerusalem. He also took much bronze from Hadarezer's cities. Solomon later used the bronze to make the sea, the pillars, and the vessels of bronze for the temple. David also put garrisons in Syria. And the Syrians served him, and brought him tribute.

The book says Jehovah gave David victory wherever he went. It says, "**And David reigned over all Israel, and he executed justice and righteousness to all his people**" (1st Chronicles 18:14). Then it names six of his chief officials. It also says his sons were chief men around him.

Next the book tells about a time when the king of Ammon humiliated David's messengers. David had sent them to the king of Ammon to encourage him after his father died. His father had shown kindness to David. However, the rulers with the king of Ammon told him the messengers were spies. So he shaved them, cut off their garments at their buttocks, and sent them away. The

messengers were greatly ashamed. David told the men to remain at Jericho until their beards had grown. God gives every man a beard. Why do many men refuse to keep it?

Then the sons of Ammon hired the Syrians to join them to fight Israel. When David heard of it, he sent out Joab and his mighty men. Joab defeated them, and the Syrians fled. Then the sons of Ammon escaped into their city, and Joab returned to Jerusalem. However, the Syrians mustered more forces. So David gathered all Israel together, crossed over the Jordan, and came upon them. The Syrians fought, but they were again defeated and fled. The book says the Syrians made peace with David and served him.

The next year, Joab led the army to create destruction in the country of the sons of Ammon. They conquered their capital city, took much plunder, and killed many people. After that Israel had several wars with the Philistines, but they always defeated them. The book mentions a couple of giant Philistines that were killed by the servants of David.

Then David drafted all the foreigners in Israel. And he used them to prepare to build a house of God of stones. The book says David gathered many materials for the construction of the house of Jehovah. David said, **“Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be built for Jehovah must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries. I will therefore make preparation for it”** (1st Chronicles 22:5).

David then called for Solomon his son. And he commanded him to build a house for Jehovah, the God of Israel. David said he wanted to build one, but Jehovah sent word to him not to. Jehovah said he had shed much blood in great wars. Jehovah said a son would be born to him who would be a man of peace. For God was going to give peace to Israel in his days. He would build the house.

David encouraged Solomon to build it as Jehovah had said. He prayed that Jehovah would give Solomon understanding. And he encouraged Solomon to be obedient to Jehovah. He said to him, **“Be strong, and of good courage. Fear not, neither be dismayed”** (1st Chronicles 22:13). David said he had prepared great quantities of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, also timber and stone, and skillful men.

David also commanded all the rulers of Israel to help Solomon. He reminded them how much Jehovah had blessed them. And he urged them to set their heart and soul to seek after Jehovah, and

build his sanctuary. That would be the place for the ark of the covenant of Jehovah and the holy vessels.

When David became old he made Solomon king over Israel. And he gathered together all the rulers, with the priests and Levites. He numbered the Levites from thirty years and older. They were the men to do the service of the house of Jehovah. He divided them into divisions according to the three sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Also many names are mentioned. Later David numbered the sons of Levi from twenty years old and upward. The book says their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron, doing the work of the service of the house of God. The sons of Aaron were also grouped into divisions.

Also David and the captains of the army set apart three other men for the service. They were to **“prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals”** (1st Chronicles 25:1). The book names other musicians, and says, **“All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of Jehovah, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God”** (1st Chronicles 25:6). David was the man who introduced musical instruments in the worship of Jehovah.

Next the book tells about the divisions of the porters. It names several men and their sons, saying, **“Of these were the divisions of the porters, even of the chief men, having offices like their brothers to minister in the house of Jehovah”** (1st Chronicles 26:12). They cast lots for every gate of the temple: for the east, north, south, and west sides. They were also Levites.

The book next describes the government of David, and names many of his officers. After that David assembled all the rulers of Israel, and the captains with the officers. David stood up on his feet, and spoke to them. He said it was in his heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and for a footstool of their God.

However, Jehovah said no, because he was a man of war, having shed much blood. Nevertheless, Jehovah chose him to be king, and Jehovah chose Solomon to succeed him on the throne. God told him that Solomon would build his house and his courts. Jehovah said he would establish his kingdom, if he was constant in his obedience. Then David told them to seek all the commandments of Jehovah their God so that they would continue to possess the good land. David also encouraged his son Solomon to obey Jehovah

After that the book says, **“Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch of the temple, and of the houses of it, and of the treasuries of it, and of the upper rooms of it, and of the inner chambers of it, and of the place of the mercy-seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, for the courts of the house of Jehovah, and for all the chambers round about, for the treasuries of the house of God, and for the treasuries of the dedicated things, also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of Jehovah”** (1st Chronicles 28:11-13).

He also gave him the pattern for the various vessels and items of furniture, including the cherubim over the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. Then the book says, **“All this, David said, I have been made to understand in writing from the hand of Jehovah, even all the works of this pattern”** (1st Chronicles 28:19). In other words, the pattern of the temple was given by God, just as it was for the tabernacle. David told Solomon to be strong and of good courage and do it, for Jehovah was with him.

Then David told the assembly about the great store of materials he had accumulated for the project. And he asked who was willing to make a contribution. So the rulers and the captains offered willingly. David and the people rejoiced with great joy because they offered with a perfect heart willingly to Jehovah.

After that David praised Jehovah before the assembly. He began by saying, **“Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is thine”** (1st Chronicles 29:10-11). He said riches and honor come from Jehovah, and he rules over all. He thanked him, and praised him.

Then he said even though they had offered willingly, yet all things come from Jehovah. He said they were sojourners, whose days on earth were as a shadow. He said he knew that Jehovah tries the hearts, and has pleasure in uprightness. David said he offered willingly, and now had seen his people offer willingly. And he asked Jehovah to keep it in the hearts of his people forever. He also asked Jehovah to give Solomon a perfect heart to obey him, and built the palace for Jehovah.

Then David told all the assembly to praise Jehovah their God. So they all did, bowing down their heads, and doing obeisance to Jehovah and the king. The next day they offered many sacrifices to

Jehovah. And they ate and drank before Jehovah with great gladness. They even made Solomon king the second time, and Zadok to be priest.

After that the book says, **“Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah as king instead of David his father, and prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. And all the rulers, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves to Solomon the king. And Jehovah magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel”** (1st Chronicles 29:23-25).

David had reigned over all Israel forty years: seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. He died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor.

## A Description of Second Chronicles

This book begins with the reign of king Solomon. It says, **“And Jehovah his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly”** (2nd Chronicles 1:1). God appeared to him one night, and said, **“Ask what I shall give thee”** (2nd Chronicles 1:7). Solomon asked for wisdom and knowledge. He wanted to rule God’s people well. God said he would give them to him. He also said he would give him riches, wealth, and honor.

Next the book tells about Solomon building a house for Jehovah, and a house for his kingdom. Solomon counted all the foreigners in Israel. And he put them to work carrying things and cutting things. Solomon built the house of Jehovah on mount Moriah in Jerusalem. He began building the temple in the fourth year of his reign. It was over twice as big as the tabernacle. It also had a very tall tower at the front of it. The tower was a hundred eighty feet high, which is the height of an eighteen story building. It was no doubt the tallest structure in Israel. And it must have been visible many miles away.

The entire inside of the house of God was overlaid with gold. And the walls and doors had pictures of cherubim engraved on them. The ceiling had pictures of palm trees and chains. The most holy house (the room for the ark of the covenant) had two wooden images of cherubim. They were also completely covered with gold. They stood beside each other with their wings outstretched. Each of their wings was about eight feet long. That meant together they

spanned thirty-two feet, which was the width of the room. Remember, real cherubim are like awesome guards. The veil in front of the most holy place was linen. And it was of several colors with pictures of cherubim on it.

The things that were outside the temple were of bronze. There were two great pillars that were about thirty-eight feet high. They stood in front of the temple, one on the right side and the other on the left. There was also an altar of bronze. It was about thirty feet square and fifteen feet high. And there was a huge bowl-shaped tank for water called the sea. It was about fifteen feet across. It was set on top of twelve bronze images of oxen. There were also ten wheeled basins for washing. The book says they washed things for the burnt offering in those. The water of the sea was for the priests to wash with.

Solomon also made all the furniture for inside the temple. There was an altar to burn incense, ten lampstands, ten tables, a hundred basins, and various utensils. All those items were made of gold. There were many more items in the temple than were in the tabernacle. Solomon also made a courtyard to surround the house of Jehovah.

When the temple was finished Solomon assembled all the leaders of Israel. They came during the feast of the seventh month. And they sacrificed many sheep and oxen. The Levites also put the ark of the covenant in the temple at that time. They placed it in the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim. After they came out they praised and thanked Jehovah with music. And the glory of Jehovah filled the house with a cloud.

Solomon told the people that the temple he built would last forever. Yet nothing in this sinful world lasts forever, except the word of God. The temple was destroyed long ago. The ark of the covenant and the tablets in it perished long ago. But the words of the covenant—the ten commandments—endure. They are the real treasure. Those words have the power to change the world from bad to good.

Solomon had made a platform to stand on. It was about five feet high. He knelt down on it, spread out his hands toward heaven, and prayed. Solomon praised God for his loving kindness. And he asked Jehovah to answer the prayers of all who would pray toward the temple. He finished his prayer by asking Jehovah to always be with them.

After his prayer fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offerings. And the temple was filled with the glory of Jehovah again. All the people bowed down and worshiped. Then they sacrificed thousands of oxen and sheep. So the house of Jehovah, and the altar were dedicated. The book says the people went home with joyful and glad hearts.

Then Jehovah appeared to Solomon again. He said he had heard his prayer. And Jehovah said he had chosen that place and that house. Jehovah said he would answer the prayers of the people. He would heal their land whenever they turned from their wicked ways. He also told Solomon that if he would walk faithfully as David had, then he would establish his kingdom. He also said that if he and the people forsook him for other gods, he would pluck them out of the land. And he would cast the house out of his sight.

The book says that Solomon was very rich, and he made many beautiful things. In fact, all of his drinking vessels were of gold. It says silver was considered nothing in his days. Then he slept with his fathers, and Rehoboam his son reigned in his place. However, ten of the tribes of Israel revolted. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained with Rehoboam. Jehovah caused Israel to be divided because of their sinfulness.

Afterward all the priests and Levites throughout Israel came to Rehoboam. They came because Jeroboam king of Israel had cast them off from being priests. He appointed his own priests. He also made idols for the people to worship instead of Jehovah. Therefore, all whose hearts were for Jehovah came to Jerusalem. The book says they made Rehoboam's kingdom stronger. However, when he became strong, he forsook the law of Jehovah. And all Israel forsook Jehovah with him. The Bible says Rehoboam did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah.

Then he slept with his fathers, and Abijah his son reigned in his place. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam king of Israel. Abijah went to battle with an army of 400,000 men against 800,000 men with Jeroboam. However, Abijah trusted Jehovah, and God smote Jeroboam and all Israel. So Abijah and his army killed 500,000 men of Israel. And after that Jehovah smote Jeroboam so that he died.

Then Abijah slept with his fathers, and Asa his son reigned in his place. Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah. He took away all the things of idolatry. And he commanded

Judah to seek Jehovah, and do the law. So Jehovah gave peace to the land. However, sometime later Zerah the Ethiopian came against him with an army of a million men. Asa went out to meet him, and he cried to Jehovah for his help. The book says that Jehovah smote the Ethiopians and they fled. Asa and the people pursued them, and carried away much booty.

Asa had no more war until the thirty-sixth year of his reign. Then Baasha king of Israel built a city as a blockade against him. So Asa took out treasures of the house of Jehovah and the king's house. And he sent them to Ben-hadad king of Syria to help him. Then Ben-hadad attacked Israel, and Baasha quit building the city.

However, Hanani the seer spoke to Asa. He said it was foolish of him to rely on the king of Syria instead of Jehovah. He reminded Asa of the huge army of the Ethiopians that Jehovah defeated for him. He said now Asa would always have wars. But Asa became angry with the seer, and put him in a prison. The book says that Asa was in a rage because of it. He also oppressed some of the people at the same time. So in the thirty-ninth year of his reign his feet became severely diseased. Yet he did not seek Jehovah, but went to the physicians. And he died in the forty-first year of his reign.

Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place. Jehovah was with him, because he walked in the former ways of David. He even sent five of his rulers to teach the law of Jehovah in the cities of Judah. The book says the fear of Jehovah came upon all the other kingdoms, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat. So Jehoshaphat grew exceedingly great.

Sometime later Jehoshaphat joined with Ahab, the evil king of Israel. And he went with him in war to take a city back from the Syrians. When Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem, Jehu the seer went out and spoke to him. He said, **“Should thou help the wicked, and love those who hate Jehovah? For this thing wrath is upon thee from before Jehovah. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou have put away the Asheroth out of the land, and have set thy heart to seek God”** (2nd Chronicles 19:2-3).

After that the book says that Jehoshaphat went out among his people to bring them back to Jehovah. He also set judges in the land. And he told them to judge right and take no bribes. Then the book says that the sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, and some others came against Jehoshaphat to war. When he heard about it he

was afraid. And so he set himself to seek for Jehovah. He also proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And the people came out of all the cities of Judah to seek Jehovah.

Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly in the house of Jehovah and prayed. He reminded Jehovah of his promise to hear them in their affliction. He told how the enemy had come against them. And he asked for God's help. The book says that all Judah stood before Jehovah, with their wives and children.

Then the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jahaziel, a Levite of the sons of Asaph. And he spoke the words of Jehovah to them. Jehovah told them not to fear, for the battle was his. He said to go down the next day against them. He said they would not need to fight, just stand and see the salvation of Jehovah. Then they all fell down before Jehovah and worshiped.

They rose early in the morning and went forth. As they went, Jehoshaphat stood, and he said, **“O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in Jehovah your God, so shall ye be established. Believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper”** (2nd Chronicles 20:20). And he appointed singers to sing to Jehovah, and give praise as they went out in front of the army.

The book says that when they began to sing and praise, Jehovah cause the soldiers of the enemy armies to kill each other. And when the people of Judah came, they saw all the dead bodies on the ground. None of them had escaped. Jehoshaphat and his people took three days to gather the spoil. Then they returned to Jerusalem with a musical parade. And the other kingdoms feared God when they heard what happened. So God gave Jehoshaphat peace.

Then Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and Jehoram his son reigned in his place. Jehoram had six brothers. He killed all of them and some other rulers of Israel. He walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He did evil in the sight of Jehovah. He had married the daughter of Ahab.

The book says that Jehoram made the people of Jerusalem sin, and he led Judah astray. Therefore, Elijah the prophet sent him a letter saying Jehovah was going to smite his family with a great plague. Elijah said, **“And thou shall have great sickness by disease of thy bowels until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness, day by day”** (2nd Chronicles 21:15). So Jehovah smote Jehoram in his bowels with an incurable disease. The book says that after two years he died of severe diseases.

Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his son king. His mother was Athaliah of the house of Ahab. He also did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. So he was killed with Jehoram the son of Ahab when he went to visit him. When Athaliah saw that her son the king was dead, she killed all of her grandsons. All except one, because the sister of king Ahaziah hid his son Joash. She was also the wife of Jehoiada the priest. Joash was hid in the house of God six years while Athaliah sat on the throne.

In the seventh year Jehoiada the priest conspired against the wicked Athaliah, and he made Joash king. When he was crowned king, the book says, **“And all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew trumpets. The singers also *played* on instruments of music, and led the singing of praise”** (2nd Chronicles 23:13). Jehoiada also had Athaliah killed. And Jehoiada made a covenant that they should be Jehovah’s people. Then they all went and destroyed the house of Baal, and all his altars and images, and killed his priest. Jehoiada also renewed all the activities of the house of Jehovah.

The book says that Joash did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah all the days of Jehoiada the priest. Jehoiada died at 130 years old. But after his death the rulers of Judah persuaded the king to forsake the house of Jehovah and serve idols. So wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because they were guilty.

The book says that Jehovah sent prophets to them to bring them back, but they would not listen. It also says that the Spirit of God came upon Zachariah the son of Jehoiada the priest. He rebuked the people because they forsook Jehovah. However, they conspired against him. And Joash the king commanded that he be stoned to death in the court of the house of Jehovah. Thus, Joash killed the son of Jehoiada the priest, the man who helped him so much. Then the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and destroyed the rulers of the people. The book says the Syrians executed Jehovah’s judgment upon Joash. They left him very sick, and his servants killed him on his own bed.

Amaziah his son reigned in his place. The book says, **“And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, but not with a perfect heart”** (2nd Chronicles 25:2). After he began to reign he killed the servants who had killed his father. After that he prepared for war against the Edomites. Amaziah defeated the Edomites, but he brought back their gods, and worshiped them. Therefore, Jehovah was angry with him, and sent a prophet to rebuke him. However, Amaziah told the prophet to be quiet, otherwise he would

have him killed.

Sometime later Amaziah was killed by a conspiracy. Then all the people of Judah made Uzziah his son king. The book says he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. It says he fought successfully against his enemies, and he grew very strong. He built things and grew things. The book says, **“And his name spread far abroad. For he was marvelously helped, till he was strong”** (2nd Chronicles 26:15).

However, it also says, **“But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God. For he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense”** (2nd Chronicles 26:16). The priests resisted him, but he became angry. And while he was angry, leprosy broke out in his forehead. So he was a leper for the rest of his life, living in a separate house. Jotham his son judged the people in his place. After Uzziah died, Jotham became king.

Jotham did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. The book says, however, that the people still did corruptly. The book says he became mighty, because he ordered his ways before Jehovah. Then he slept with his fathers, and Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

Ahaz did not do that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even burnt his sons in the fire like the nations Jehovah cast out before the sons of Israel. He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus. Ahaz also plundered the house of God, and shut up its doors.

Sometime later Ahaz slept with his fathers, and Hezekiah his son took his place. He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. He immediately opened the doors of the house of Jehovah and repaired them. He also commanded the Levites to sanctify themselves and the house of Jehovah. He told them to take out the filthiness in it.

Hezekiah did a lot of things to promote the temple and the service of Jehovah. The book says that Hezekiah **“wrought that which was good and right and faithful before Jehovah his God”** (2nd Chronicles 31:20). It says he did it with all his heart and prospered. However, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came against Judah. He sent his servants to Jerusalem. They told the people not to trust Hezekiah and Jehovah their God to deliver them. Sennacherib said none of the gods of the other nations had saved them from him. He

also wrote letters, reviling Jehovah and speaking against him. However, Jehovah sent an agent from heaven to destroy the camp of the king of Assyria. And after Sennacherib returned to his country, he was killed by his own sons.

The time came when Hezekiah was about to die, so he prayed to Jehovah. The book says Jehovah answered him. Later, however, Hezekiah was ungrateful. He became proud, which brought wrath upon him and the people. But then he humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. So Jehovah's wrath did not come in his days. Then Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

Manasseh did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. He even set up an idol in the house of Jehovah. And he used his sons for burnt offerings. The book says that Manasseh caused Judah and Jerusalem to do great evil. Even more than the nations Jehovah destroyed before them. It says Jehovah spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen.

Therefore, Jehovah sent the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains to Babylon. However, in his distress he besought Jehovah and humbled himself greatly. So Jehovah restored him to his kingdom in Jerusalem. The book says, "**Then Manasseh knew that Jehovah he was God**" (2nd Chronicles 33:13). He took away the foreign gods, and the idol from the house of Jehovah, and all the altars he had built. And he commanded Judah to serve Jehovah.

Then Manasseh slept with his fathers, and Amon his son reigned in his place. He did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. His servants made a conspiracy, and killed him in his own house. However, the people killed the conspirators, and made Josiah his son king in his place.

Josiah did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. When Hilkiyah the priest found the book of the law of Jehovah, Shaphan the scribe read it to the king. Josiah tore his clothes, then he commanded them to inquire of Jehovah for him. He said, "**For great is the wrath of Jehovah that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of Jehovah, to do according to all that is written in this book**" (2nd Chronicles 34:21).

So they went to Huldah the prophetess. And she told them the words of Jehovah. Jehovah said the people had forsaken him for other gods. Therefore, he was going to bring on them all the curses

written in the book. She said, however, that the king would not see it, because he had humbled himself and wept before God.

When the king heard those things, he gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. He went up to the house of Jehovah, and he read all the words of the book of the covenant to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Then he made a covenant to walk after Jehovah, and keep his commandments with all his heart and with all his soul. He also caused all in Jerusalem and Benjamin to agree to it. The book says the inhabitants of Jerusalem did.

Afterward Neco, king of Egypt, went up to fight against a city by the Euphrates (which was not in Israel). And Josiah went out against him. Neco sent ambassadors to warn him against it. He even said that God had commanded him for the war. Nevertheless, Josiah went out and was killed in his chariot by archers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned him. Is that not a lesson for us all? No matter how good we may be, we need to be wise and careful in what we do, and not be stubborn and proud.

There were four more kings of Judah after Josiah. All of them did evil in the sight of Jehovah. Moreover, the people continued to reject and disobey Jehovah. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against them. God did not want to destroy them, but he did. The book says, **“And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy”** (2nd Chronicles 36:12-16).

Notice that last expression: **“TILL THERE WAS NO REMEDY.”** Jehovah God did all he could to save his people. He tried everything until there was nothing left to try. Truly, God can do anything, but he cannot do that which is contradictory. He cannot save us against our will—not as long as we are made in his image. To say otherwise is illogical. It is like wanting God to make us free, but not free. Yes, God can do anything, but not silly contradictions.

Because the sons of Israel constantly rebelled against Jehovah, he sent the king of the Chaldeans against them. He had a cruel army. They were brutal to all of them, men women and children. They also plundered the house of God, and the treasures of the king and his rulers. Then they burnt the house of God, and all the palaces

with fire. And they broke down the wall of Jerusalem. Those who escaped death were carried away to Babylon to become servants to their king until the reign of the kingdom of Persia. That was to fulfill the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah. He said the land would be desolate for seventy years.

Then, after the seventy years, Cyrus, king of Persia, made a proclamation. It said, **“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth has Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me. And he has charged me to build a house for him in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, Jehovah his God be with him, and let him go up”** (2nd Chronicles 36:23).

### A Description of **Ezra**

This book begins the same way Second Chronicles ends. It tells of the proclamation that Cyrus king of Persia made. Cyrus said that Jehovah commanded him to build a house for God in Jerusalem. And he told the people of God to go to Jerusalem and build it. He also told everyone who stayed behind to give money, goods, and beasts to those who went.

The book says, **“Then the heads of fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred, rose up to go up to build the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem”** (Ezra 1:5). Cyrus also sent back all of the vessels of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken.

Next the book gives the names of many men who went. They included priests, singers, porters, the Nethinim (temple servants), and other Levites. All those people dwelt in their cities because Jerusalem was in rubble. However, in the seventh month they all gathered together in Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles. Then they built the altar for the burnt offerings, and began the sacrifices according to the law of Moses.

However, the foundation of the temple of Jehovah was not yet laid. So they paid the construction workers, and they bought timber from Tyre. They began to build in the second month of the second year they were there. They appointed Levites, from twenty years and older, to oversee the work. When the foundation was laid the priests and the Levites praised Jehovah with trumpets and cymbals. The book says the people shouted with a great shout. However, the

old men who had seen the first house wept aloud.

Then the enemies of Judah and Benjamin came to the leaders of the Jews. They offered to build with them. They claimed they also sacrificed to God. However, the leaders of the sons of Israel said they had nothing to do with them. They would build it themselves as king Cyrus had commanded. Then the people of the land started making trouble. They also wrote accusations against them to the kings of Persia.

The book tells about one letter they wrote against Jerusalem. It said the Jews were **“building the rebellious and the evil city, and have finished the walls, and repaired the foundations”** (Ezra 4:12). It warned the king of Persia, saying the Jews would rebel if the city was rebuilt. It also asked him to check the records to prove they were right. The king wrote back, and said the records showed the city had been rebellious. Therefore, he decreed they stop building until further notice.

However, the book says the prophets Haggai and Zechariah helped Zerubbabel (a leader there) and Jeshua the priest. So they began again to build the house of God. When the governor came and asked who gave them authority to do it, they gave him an answer. And the governor sent it to Darius, who was king at that time.

They said they were servants of the God of heaven and earth. And were rebuilding the house that a great king of Israel had built. They said their fathers had angered the God of heaven to destroy the house, and carry the people away to Babylon. They said, however, that Cyrus made a decree to build the house of God. And they asked the king to search the records to find that decree.

Darius made a search, and they found a record of the decree. It confirmed the command to restore the house of God. It also said the king's house would pay for it. Therefore, Darius said to the governor, **“Let the work of this house of God alone. Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in its place”** (Ezra 6:7).

So the governor did as the king commanded. When the house was finished, they dedicated it with joy. The book tells how many animals they offered. It was much less than the dedication of the first temple: 712 versus 142,000. The book says they also kept the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread with joy.

Next the book tells about Ezra the priest. It says he went up from

Babylon after those things. He was a skilled scholar in the law of Moses. Some of the sons of Israel came to Jerusalem with him. The group included priests, Levites, singers, porters, and the Nethinim (the singers, porters, and the Nethinim were also all Levites). The book says, “... **he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances**” (Ezra 7:9-10).

Before he left, however, the book tells how he worked with the people who went with him. King Artaxerxes, who was now king, had given Ezra a letter. It said he was to examine Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of his God. That meant to see if the law of Moses was being obeyed. It also said he was to carry all the silver and gold that had been offered for the house of God in Jerusalem. And it also told Ezra to appoint rulers and judges who knew the laws of God.

Ezra praised Jehovah for all his help with the king. He said “**And I was strengthened according to the hand of Jehovah my God upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me**” (Ezra 7:28). Then Ezra said he proclaimed a fast at the river. It was to humble themselves, and to ask for God’s help for the journey.

After that Ezra discovered the people of Israel, including the priests and Levites, had married wives from the nations God had commanded them against. When Ezra heard that, he tore his garment, plucked hair from his head and beard, and sat down. Then all who trembled at the words of God assembled with him. That evening he fell upon his knees, spread out his hands to Jehovah and prayed. Among his words Ezra told God he was ashamed to lift up his face to him, because they were guilty. Ezra told how they had forsaken his commandment. They had married with the unclean peoples of the land, people who had filled it with filthiness. Ezra wondered if God would destroy what was left of them because of it. He ended by saying Jehovah was righteous, but they were guilty.

While Ezra prayed there many men, women, and children gathered with him. And they also wept. Then one of the men spoke to Ezra. He suggested making a covenant with God to put away all those wives and their children. And he said it should be done according to the law. So Ezra gathered all the people of Judah, and made them promise to do it. Then the judges went to work, and after three months it was all done.

## A Description of **Nehemiah**

In this book Nehemiah tells of his work to rebuild Jerusalem. He first says he was in the palace of Artaxerxes king of Persia. Some men of Judah came to him, and he asked them about the exiles who had returned there. They said the people were in great affliction and shame. They also said the wall of Jerusalem was in rubble. When Nehemiah heard that, he sat down and wept, and he mourned for days. He also fasted and prayed to God about it. In his prayer he asked God to give him mercy in the sight of the king. For he was his cupbearer.

When Nehemiah brought wine to him, the king asked why his heart was sorrowful. Nehemiah said the city of his forefathers was in ruins. Then the king asked what he wanted. Nehemiah said he prayed to God (it must have been silently), and he asked the king to send him to Judah to build the city. The king said he could go. Nehemiah also asked for letters to give to the governors there for help. Nehemiah said, **“And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me”** (Nehemiah 2:8).

Nehemiah then said he came to those governors, and gave them the king’s letters. The king had also sent with him captains of the army and horsemen. However, enemies were there as well. For Nehemiah said, **“And when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there came a man to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel”** (Nehemiah 2:10).

After examining the city, Nehemiah encouraged them to rise up and build. He said, **“So they strengthened their hands for the good work”** (Nehemiah 2:18). However, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, heard of it. And they laughed at them and despised them. But Nehemiah said to them, **“The God of heaven, he will prosper us. Therefore we his servants will arise and build, but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem”** (Nehemiah 2:20).

Nehemiah said that Sanballat became angry because they were building the wall. Sanballat said to his brothers and the army of Samaria, **“What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they are burnt?”** (Nehemiah 4:2). Tobiah joined in making fun of them.

He said if a fox went up on the wall it would fall down. But Nehemiah prayed, asking God to punish those men.

Then Nehemiah said all the sections of the wall were joined together half way up. They made progress because the people were eager to work. However, when Sanballat, Tobiah, and others heard of their progress, they were very angry. And they conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem. Therefore, Nehemiah said they prayed to God, and set guards day and night. He also told the laborers to keep their weapons with them while they worked. The man who sounded the trumpet for alarm was by him.

Next Nehemiah tells of another crisis. The rich Jews were taking advantage of the others. Some of the workmen had to go back to farming to get food. Others said they had to mortgage their property. Still others said they had to hire out their sons and daughters, because other men had their fields and vineyards. Nehemiah said he was very angry when he heard their cry.

Therefore, he assembled all the leading men and the rulers. He accused them of taking advantage of the poor people. Nehemiah said they did not answer him a word (probably because they knew they were guilty). Nehemiah also told them to restore what they took. They vowed they would, and then did as they promised.

Nehemiah said he had been appointed governor in Judah for twelve years. However, he did not take payment from the people, to spare them. Instead of demanding to be fed, Nehemiah said he fed 250 men of the Jews and the rulers, besides visitors. Then he said, **“Remember to me, O my God, for good, all that I have done for this people”** (Nehemiah 5:19). He was a true leader in the spirit of Christ.

Nehemiah said the wall was finished in fifty-two days. He said that caused much dismay among their enemies. They saw that the work was brought about by God. After the wall was finished Nehemiah said he put his brother and another man in charge of Jerusalem. He told them not to open the gates until the sun was hot. And he told them to have guards standing by when they were shut. He also told them to appoint watchmen in the city. He said the city was widespread, but there were only a few people in it.

Then Nehemiah said God put into his heart to reckon all the people by genealogy. He said he found the book of the genealogy of those who first came back from the captivity. The list of names is very similar to the one in the first part of the book of Ezra.

The sons of Israel lived in their cities. But in the seventh month they all gathered together in a broad place in Jerusalem. And they asked Ezra the priest to bring the book of the law of Moses. When Ezra opened the book of the law, all the people stood. He then blessed Jehovah, and all the people answered, "Truly, Truly," with their hands raised. They also bowed their heads to the ground and worshiped Jehovah.

Ezra stood on a wooden pulpit, and he read from early morning until midday. The book says that all the people listened carefully. And some Levites helped the people understand what was read. It also says that all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. They wept because they learned how disobedient they had been. However, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites who taught them told the people not to weep. They told them to feast joyfully. So they did.

On the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month they separated themselves from all foreigners. They also confessed their sins. One-fourth of the day the law was read to them, and one-fourth they confessed and worshiped Jehovah. The book also tells about a long prayer they uttered. In the prayer they mentioned how Jehovah took them out of Egypt, but they were stiff-necked and disobedient. It told how they prospered in the land, but they rebelled and rejected God's law. So he gave them over to peoples of other lands. In the prayer they asked Jehovah to notice their distress and bondage. They finished the prayer by saying they were going to make a sure covenant to walk in God's law and be obedient. However, the book later tells how quickly most of them forsook that covenant as they had all the others.

Next the book says the rulers of the people dwelt in Jerusalem. However, the city did not have enough inhabitants. Therefore, they cast lots for one in ten of the people to go live in Jerusalem. It tells how many sons of Judah and sons of Benjamin lived there. It also tells how many priests, Levites, and porters were there. Then the book names towns and villages where some of them dwelt.

After that the book tells about the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem. It says the Levites were summoned to come to Jerusalem **"to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps"** (Nehemiah 12:27). And so the sons of the singers gathered themselves together.

Next Nehemiah described the dedication ceremony. He brought the rulers of Judah upon the wall. And he appointed two great companies that gave thanks and went in procession. The wall went all the way around the city. One went on the wall to the right, and the other went to the left. They marched around in a musical parade of thanksgiving to God. The two groups circled the wall in opposite directions, and met together on the other side. Then they offered sacrifices. Nehemiah said they rejoiced with great joy.

Before that, however, Eliashib the priest had prepared a great room in the house of God for Tobiah. Eliashib had joined himself with Tobiah. Nehemiah had gone back to Artaxerxes king of Babylon. When he returned to Jerusalem he discovered the evil that Eliashib had done. So Nehemiah cast out all of the household stuff of Tobiah. Then he commanded the rooms be cleaned.

Nehemiah also discovered that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them. Therefore, they and the singers fled each one to his field to grow food. Nehemiah said he argued with the rulers, wanting to know why the house of God was forsaken. After that he said all Judah brought the tithe to the treasuries.

Next he said he saw some merchantmen working on the sabbath. They also brought their wares into Jerusalem to sell on the sabbath day. So he argued again with the leading men of Judah. And he commanded the gates of Jerusalem be closed throughout the sabbath day.

Nehemiah also discovered Jews who had married Philistine, Ammonite, and Moabite women. He said their sons could not speak in the Jew's language. He said, therefore, **“I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves”** (Nehemiah 13:25).

He used Solomon as an example to them of how much evil that pagan wives can cause. Nehemiah said, **“Thus I cleansed them from all foreigners, and appointed charges for the priests and for the Levites, each one in his work, and for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the first-fruits. Remember me, O my God, for good”** (Nehemiah 13:28-31). And thus ends the book.

## A Description of **Esther**

Ahasuerus was king of Persia and Media. That was an empire of 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia. And in the third year of his reign he made a feast to all his rulers and servants in Shushan the palace. He showed them all the glory of his kingdom for a hundred eighty days. Then he made a seven-day feast for all in the palace, both great and small.

Vashti was the queen, and she also made a feast for the women in the royal house. On the seventh day the king commanded Vashti to come with her royal crown. He wanted to show the peoples and the rulers her beauty. However, she refused to come, and that angered the king. There were seven rulers of Persia and Media who were next to the king.

When the king asked the wise men what they should do with queen Vashti, one of the rulers said, **“Vashti the queen has not done wrong only to the king, but also to all the rulers, and to all the peoples that are in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen will come abroad to all women, to make their husbands contemptible in their eyes when it shall be reported, King Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she did not come”** (Esther 1:16-17).

He recommended deposing Vashti, and making a better woman queen. And he said all the kingdom should know about it, and that way **“all the wives will give to their husbands honor, both to great and small”** (Esther 1:20). The saying pleased the king and the rulers. So he sent letters to every province that every man should be ruler in his own house. After that the king’s servants looked for pretty young virgins for a new queen.

Next the book tells about Mordecai the Jew. He had adopted Esther because she was an orphan, and she was his uncle’s daughter. The book says she was a beautiful maiden. And so she was one of the virgins selected. When the time came for Esther to see the king, he chose her. Afterward he made a great feast of celebration.

After that the book says that Mordecai learned of a conspiracy. Two of the king’s servants planned to attack the king. He reported it to Esther, who told it to the king. After an inquiry confirmed it, both men were hanged.

Later king Ahasuerus promoted a man named Haman above all

the other rulers. All the king's servants bowed down to Haman except for Mordecai. That made Haman angry. Haman was an evil man, so he decided to kill all the Jews because Mordecai was a Jew. He cast a lot to decide when to kill them. And the lot came up for the month of Adar.

Then Haman went to king Ahasuerus, and said there were certain evil people in his kingdom. And he urged the king to have a decree made to destroy them. The king trusted Haman, so he did. When Mordecai learned of it, he tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes. Then he went around the city crying with a loud and bitter cry. Esther sent a messenger to Mordecai to find out why he was acting that way.

Mordecai gave him a copy of the decree to show to Esther. And he ordered her to go and plead to the king for her people. Esther told Mordecai to have all the Jews in Shushan fast three days. She said she and her maidens would fast the same way. Then she would risk her life by going to the king. She could be killed if she went to him uninvited. So Mordecai did as she had commanded him.

On the third day Esther put on her royal apparel, and went to the king. He asked what was her request. She asked him to first come with Haman to her banquet. On the second day of the banquet Esther told the king her request. She said, **“O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish”** (Esther 7:3-4).

The king wanted to know who thought he could do that. Esther said it was an enemy, “this wicked Haman.” The king was angry, and he ordered Haman hanged upon the gallows he had made for Mordecai. He also gave everything that belonged to Haman to Esther. Esther also told the king of her relation to Mordecai. The king had also learned how Mordecai had warned about the threat to his life. Therefore, the king took the ring he had given to Haman, and gave it to Mordecai.

Esther then fell at the feet of the king, and pleaded with him to stop Haman's evil against the Jews. You see, no law of the Medes and Persians could be canceled. So the king wrote a new law saying the Jews could fight to defend themselves. Therefore, in every city where the king's decree came they had gladness.

On the thirteenth day of Adar, the Jews gathered together to defend themselves. The book says, **“And the Jews smote all their**

**enemies with the stroke of the sword, and with slaughter and destruction, and did what they would to those who hated them”** (Esther 9:5). At Esther’s request the king also allowed them to do the same thing on the fourteenth day. After that Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in all the provinces. He told them to keep the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar as a yearly celebration. The book ends by saying how great Mordecai became.

## A Description of **Job**

The book begins, **“There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, and one who feared God, and turned away from evil.”** He had seven sons and three daughters. He was also very rich. He had thousands of livestock, and a very great household. The book says he was the greatest of all the sons of the east.

On the day when the sons of God presented themselves before Jehovah, Satan also came among them. Jehovah asked Satan where he came from. Satan said **“From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it”** (Job 1:7). Jehovah asked if he saw how righteous Job was. Satan said it was because God was protecting him and blessing him. He said if he stopped doing that, then Job **“will renounce thee to thy face”** (Job 1:11). So Jehovah put everything Job had in the power of Satan. Only he could not harm Job. Then Satan left.

Afterward messengers began coming to Job with news of disaster. All his livestock were stolen, and his sons and daughters were killed. When Job heard it, he tore his robe, shaved his head, fell on the ground, and worshiped. He said, **“Naked I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return there. Jehovah gave, and Jehovah has taken away, blessed be the name of Jehovah”** (Job 1:21). The book says that Job did not sin, nor accuse God foolishly.

Again the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah. Satan was also there, and Jehovah asked him if he saw how righteous Job was. God also said, **“And he still holds fast his integrity, although thou moved me against him, to destroy him without cause”** (Job 2:3). Satan responded, **“Skin for skin, yea, all that a man has he will give for his life”** (Job 2:4). He said if his body were afflicted, Job **“will renounce thee to thy face”** (Job

2:5). So Jehovah put Job in the hand of Satan, only he had to spare his life.

Then Satan left and smote Job with severe boils, from the bottom of his foot to the top of his head. His wife said to him, **“Do thou still hold fast thine integrity? Renounce God, and die”** (Job 2:9). Job told her she spoke as foolish women speak. He said, **“What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?”** (Job 2:10). Job proved that God was true, and Satan was a liar.

Sometime later Job’s three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—came to comfort him. The book says when they approached, they did not even recognize him. They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. They did not say a word to him, because his grief was very great. Then Job spoke. He cursed the day of his birth, and wondered why he had been born.

Eliphaz answered, but he was not very sympathetic. He said Job had helped others, but fainted when he had trouble. Eliphaz asked Job who ever perished who was innocent? He said those who sow trouble reap it. He told Job he should accept God’s punishment and live right. Then God would make him happy. In other words, it was all Job’s fault.

Job said he wished his grief could be weighed. He said it would be heavier than the sand of the seas. He said he wanted God to take his life from him. He said he had neither strength nor hope anymore. Job said he had not denied the words of the Holy One. He said that was his only comfort. Job said a friend should show kindness to a man who was about to faint, yet even his brothers had forsaken him.

He asked his friends to show him how he had done wrong. And he asked them to act like friends. Then he told them how painful his life was. He said he had months of misery, and could not even rest at night. He said he hated his life. And he asked God why he made him so miserable. Nobody knows how long Job suffered, but he told his friends he had been suffering for months.

Next Bildad spoke, and he asked Job how long he was going to talk like wind. He asked, **“Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert righteousness?”** (Job 8:3). He said if Job searched for God and lived right, then God would listen. And he would make him happy and prosperous.

When Job answered, he spoke of how wise and mighty God was.

And he asked how then he could answer God. He said, **“Though I be righteous, my own mouth shall condemn me. Though I be perfect, it shall prove me perverse”** (Job 9:20). It all seemed hopeless to Job. He said God destroys those who are good as well as those who are bad. He also said God had given the earth to sinners. He said God knew that he was not wicked.

Job did not know that Satan was the cause of his suffering. So he thought God did it, which caused him to question God’s justice. That is one of the most important lessons of this book. It is unfair for us to question the goodness of God, because we cannot know all that he knows. Nevertheless, we do have the light of God’s Bible, which includes this book. And Job did not have that. Remember those things when you experience sorrow.

Then Zophar accused Job of mocking. He said that Job claimed to be pure and clean. But he told him, **“Know therefore that God exacts of thee less than thine iniquity deserves”** (Job 11:6). He said we cannot understand the ways of God. However, if Job would do right, and put away his sin, then his misery would end, and he would have peace.

Job defended himself, and said, **“I am as a man who is a laughing-stock to his neighbor. I who called upon God, and he answered. The just, the perfect man is a laughing-stock”** (Job 12:4). Job was not being arrogant when he said he was a perfect man (in the loose sense). Remember, God himself said in heaven that Job was perfect and upright.

Then Job spoke a great truth we should all remember. He said, **“In the thought of him who is at ease there is contempt for misfortune. It is ready for those whose foot slips”** (Job 12:5). Therefore, never belittle anyone else’s suffering. Job also disputed with his friends about sinners. He said robbers prosper, and those who provoke God get away with it.

What Job wanted was to speak to the Almighty and reason with him. But he called his friends forgers of lies, and physicians of no value. He asked them, **“Will ye speak unrighteously for God, and talk deceitfully for him?”** (Job 13:7). He said God would punish them for their unfairness. Job asked how many were his sins?

Then he asked God, **“Why do thou hide thy face, and reckon me for thine enemy?”** (Job 13:24). Job said, **“Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble”** (Job 14:2).

Therefore, he asked God not to look at him, so he could have peace until he died.

Eliphaz spoke a second time. He criticized Job for hindering devotion to God. He told Job his own mouth condemned him. He asked Job if he was the first man born. And he asked why Job had turned his spirit against God. He even implied that Job was abominable and corrupt. Then with many words he described the troubles of the wicked man.

Job answered and said, **“I have heard many such things. Miserable comforters are ye all”** (Job 16:2). He said that God had torn him in his wrath, and persecuted him. In his ignorance Job accused God of what Satan had done to him. And countless other men have accused God wrongfully. God gave us this book so that we could know better.

Job said that God had thrown him into the hands of the wicked, and they abused him. Job said, **“My face is red with weeping, and the shadow of death is on my eyelids, although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure”** (Job 16:16-17). Yet Job still kept his faith and hope in God. He said that God could testify for him, even though his friends scoffed at him.

Then Bildad spoke a second time. He asked Job why he considered them to be beasts. He asked if the earth should be forsaken for him. Then with many words, he too described the miseries of the wicked. Those men believed that misery was caused only by wickedness. Therefore, Job’s suffering proved he was wicked. Their reasoning was false.

Job asked them how long they would break him in pieces with words. He said if he had done wrong they did not know about it. He said it was God who had caused his downfall. Job said he cried for help, but there was no justice. Job said even young children hated him. And he pleaded with his three friends. He said, **“Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God has touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?”** (Job 19:21-22).

Then Job said, **“O that my words were now written! O that they were inscribed in a book, that they were engraved in the rock forever with an iron pen and lead!”** (Job 19:23-24). God hearkened to Job, for indeed they have been written and inscribed in the greatest book of all. They have been engraved in something far more enduring than rock. For they are now a part of the Holy

Bible, the word of God, which endures forever. Although Job suffered enormously, God also loved him enormously. And he will love us too, if we will love him above all else, even when we suffer.

Then Job spoke some beautiful words of faith in God. He said, **“But as for me I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand up upon the earth. And after my skin, this *body*, is destroyed, then outside my flesh I shall see God, whom I, even I, shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger”** (Job 19:25-27). Job also warned his friends against persecuting him, lest they be punished (and in fact God did punish them later).

Then Zophar spoke a second time. But all he did was again describe wicked men. He said they prosper for a while, but then are punished and destroyed.

Job answered again, and he too spoke of the wicked. He said they had prosperous lives. He asked how often it was that disaster actually came upon them. Job said the evil man is rarely challenged. He said men even respect their graves.

Then Eliphaz responded a third time. He questioned Job’s relationship with God. Then he slandered him with many false accusations. He said there was no end to Job’s iniquities. He said he had oppressed the poor, kept food and water from the needy, sent widows away empty, and broke the arms of orphans. He said that was why Job was afflicted. No doubt false rumors multiplied against Job. That was probably why even the young children hated him.

Job answered, and said he wished he knew where to find God. Then he would present his case to him. Then he spoke of unjust and ruthless men. He said they oppress the poor. And Job said, **“Yet God does not regard the folly”** (Job 24:12), meaning he lets it happen. Job said, **“And if it be not so now, who will prove me a liar, and make my speech worth nothing?”** (Job 24:25).

Then Bildad spoke for a third and last time. He mentioned briefly God’s power and dominion. And he said that in the sight of God a man is only a worm. After that the book gives no more words from Job’s three friends.

Job answered with sarcasm, saying, **“How thou have helped him who is without power!”** (Job 26:2). He told his three friends he would never forsake his integrity. Job also spoke of the glory of his former days. Job said that aged men rose up, and rulers stopped talking when they saw him. They considered his words a blessing.

He said it was because he helped the poor, the widow, and the fatherless. He said he put on righteousness and justice like a robe. He said he was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. He said he saved men from the ruthless.

Then he told how badly he was being treated during his suffering. He described the lowest class of men. He said they lived like wild beasts, savage and uncivilized. Job said those men spat in his face. They tripped him up and blocked his path. He said they brought terror to him, and increased his suffering.

Job said God had cast him into the mire. Job did not know that Satan was his adversary, and not God, who loved him, and praised him in heaven. Satan had challenged God, and for our benefit he allowed Satan to afflict Job for a while. God knew Satan was a liar, but he had to prove it to all whom Satan tempts. And that includes all of us. Ignorance of Satan's deceit makes us vulnerable to him. Which is an important reason why Satan hates the Holy Bible.

After that the book says, **“The words of Job are ended. So these three men ceased to answer Job because he was righteous in his own eyes”** (Job 31:40). Then it speaks about another man named Elihu. He had been there listening. He was angry because Job justified himself rather than God. And he was angry with his friends because they found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. Therefore, he wanted to speak.

Elihu repeated Job's claim that he was innocent but God dealt with him as an enemy. Then he said, **“In this thou are not just, for God is greater than man”** (Job 33:12). He said God deals with men in different ways, to save his life and to teach him. Elihu also accused Job of being scornful, because he said there was no recompense. Elihu said that God does render to a man according to his ways. He said God would not do wrong nor would he pervert justice.

Elihu also criticized Job for saying he was righteous but it did him no good. He said because God had not answered him, Job spoke empty words. Elihu said he wanted to speak in favor of God. Then he told how God was just. He said God uses affliction to teach men.

After that the book says Jehovah himself answered Job out of the whirlwind. He asked Job where he was when he laid the foundations of the earth. Among other things he asked him who set the bounds of the sea. He asked if he commanded the morning to come.

He asked if the gates of death had been revealed to him. He asked if he had made the hawk soar by his wisdom. God asked many such questions of Job. And he said, **“Will thou even annul my judgment? Will thou condemn me, that thou may be justified? Or have thou an arm like God? And can thou thunder with a voice like him?”** (Job 40:8-9).

Then God spoke about two powerful beasts, one of which was leviathan. He asked Job if he could capture him, and make him a pet. He said anyone who tried would never forget nor try again. God said, **“None is so fierce that he dare stir him up. Who then is he who can stand before me?”** (Job 41:10). He said, **“I will not keep silence concerning his limbs, nor his mighty strength, nor his goodly frame”** (Job 41:12). He said that smoke and fire came forth from his mouth, and he laughed at the weapons of men.

God ended his words, saying, **“Upon earth there is not his like who is made without fear. He beholds everything that is high. He is king over all the sons of pride”** (Job 41:33-34). I do not believe that leviathan is a creature of flesh that we can see. I believe leviathan is Satan himself, the great red dragon described in Revelation 12. He was the enemy that caused Job’s suffering. For is not Satan the king of all the sons of pride?

Job answered Jehovah, and confessed he spoke of things he did not understand. He said they were too wonderful for him. Job said, **“I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee. Therefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes”** (Job 42:6).

Then Jehovah rebuked Job’s three friends. He said to Eliphaz **“My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends. For ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has. ... my servant Job shall pray for you, for him I will accept, that I not deal with you after your folly. For ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has”** (Job 42:7-8). After that all his brothers and sisters and acquaintances came. They ate with him and comforted him. They also gave him gifts. The book says that Jehovah blessed Job more than the beginning. He gave him twice as many livestock. And he gave him seven sons and three daughters. Finally, it says he lived 140 years after that.

## A Description of Psalms

This book is a collection of 150 psalms. The longest is psalm 119 with 2427 words. The shortest is psalm 117 with only 29 words. The average length is 280 words, which is about a half page in a modern Bible. Most of the psalms are praises and/or prayers to God.

They were written by different men at different times. However, none of the authors identify themselves. The names you see in some translations are later (but ancient) additions, and were not in the original documents. David wrote some of them, perhaps even half as tradition says, for the Bible calls him “**the sweet psalmist of Israel**” (2nd Samuel 23:1). However, we can only verify a few he wrote; namely, psalms 2, 16, 18, 32, 69, 95, 109, and 110. Psalms 72 and 101 were probably his.

Dear reader, what I say about each psalm is but a tiny sample of what is in them. They are all written so concisely with such richness of content they are impossible to summarize so briefly. Therefore, what follows will give you only a little flavor of what each one says.

Psalm 1 (126 words): This psalm briefly compares a righteous man with the wicked. It says he will prosper, but they will perish.

Psalm 2 (199 words): This psalm tells how the world rebels against Jehovah and his anointed, but God laughs at them. Peter said David wrote this psalm.

Psalm 3 (134 words): The author said he had many enemies, but Jehovah was his shield.

Psalm 4 (154 words): The author asked God to have mercy upon him, and hear his prayer. He told men to stand in awe of Jehovah, trust him, and do righteousness not sin.

Psalm 5 (242 words): The author said Jehovah was not a God who had pleasure in wickedness. He said, “**Thou hate all workers of iniquity. Thou will destroy those who speak lies. Jehovah abhors the blood-thirsty and deceitful man**” (5:5-6).

Psalm 6 (161 words): The author asked Jehovah not to rebuke him in his anger. He asked for mercy and healing.

Psalm 7 (327 words): The author asked God to save him from vicious men. He told of how God destroys the unrepentant sin-

ner. He said he would thank Jehovah, and sing praises to his name.

Psalm 8 (161 words): This is a psalm of praise to God. The author said that when he considered the heavens, he wondered what was man and the son of man that he thought about him.

Psalm 9 (362 words): This psalm is a prayer. The author first praised Jehovah. Then he said Jehovah would judge the world in righteousness. He told how Jehovah protects the poor and the oppressed. He said the wicked man was snared in his own work.

Psalm 10 (364 words): The author gave a vivid description of the mind and behavior of the wicked man. He said he was proud, greedy, and ruthless. He said, **“All his thoughts are, There is no God”** (10:4). He said he lurks like a lion to prey upon the poor. He said that God does see mischief and will repay.

Psalm 11 (127 words): The author said he took refuge in Jehovah. He said **“Jehovah tries the righteous man, but his soul hates the wicked man and him who loves violence”** (11:5).

Psalm 12 (144 words): The author began, **“Help, Jehovah, for the holy man ceases ... . They speak falsehood everyone with his neighbor”** He said Jehovah would cut off evil talk. He would give safety to the poor who were oppressed.

Psalm 13 (104 words): The author asked Jehovah if he would forget him forever. He asked God for deliverance from his enemies. He said he trusted his loving kindness, and would sing to him for his bountifulness.

Psalm 14 (145 words): This psalm begins, **“The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.”** The author said Jehovah looked down from heaven to see if any sought after God.

Psalm 15 (98 words): The author gave examples of how a righteous man lived. And he concluded, **“He who does these things shall never be moved”** (15:5).

Psalm 16 (193 words): The psalm begins, **“Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I take refuge.”** He said Jehovah was the portion of his inheritance, and he would bless him. Peter said David wrote this psalm.

Psalm 17 (301 words): This is a prayer for deliverance. The author said he kept from the ways of a violent man, and held to Jehovah's paths. He asked Jehovah to deliver his soul from men of the world whose portion was in this life.

Psalm 18 (899 words): This is the same as the one by David in Second Samuel 22. It begins, **“I love thee, O Jehovah, my strength.”** Then he said the cords of death surrounded him, and the floods of lawlessness made him afraid. So he cried to his God, who heard his voice. He said Jehovah would save the afflicted, but bring down haughty eyes.

Psalm 19 (268 words): This is a psalm of praise. It begins, **“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork.”** He said the ordinances of Jehovah are true. They are more desirable than gold, and sweeter than honey. He said there was great reward in keeping them.

Psalm 20 (142 words): This psalm expresses trust in Jehovah. And it says we will triumph in his salvation

Psalm 21 (234 words): The first half of this psalm describes several ways that Jehovah blessed the king. The second half tells how Jehovah finds out all his enemies and destroys them.

Psalm 22 (571 words): This psalm prophesied many things that happened to Jesus when he was crucified. It begins with the words Jesus quoted on the cross: **“My God, my God, why have thou forsaken me?”** The author said all who saw laughed him to scorn, and said, **“He trusted on Jehovah. Let him deliver him. Let him rescue him, since he delights in him”** (22:8). He said strong bulls and dogs, a company of evildoers, had surrounded him, and his strength was gone. He said, **“They pierced my hands and my feet. I may count all my bones. They look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast a lot”** (22:16-18). And he asked Jehovah to hasten and save him.

Psalm 23 (116 words): This is the most famous of the psalms. The author said Jehovah was his shepherd, and he told of the many ways he cared for him.

Psalm 24 (174 words): This psalm begins by saying that the earth and those who dwell in it are Jehovah's, because he made it. It asks, who will ascend into the hill of Jehovah? It answers, he who lives right, and does no wrong; he will be blessed.

Psalm 25 (349 words): This psalm is full of praises and petitions to Jehovah. He said Jehovah was good, and does good. He asked Jehovah to pardon his iniquity. Then he spoke of his affliction and his enemies. And he asked Jehovah to save him.

Psalm 26 (180 words): This is a prayer. The author asked Jehovah to examine him, and judge him, for he had been faithful to him. He said he had not assembled with evildoers. He said he would walk in his integrity, and bless Jehovah in the congregations.

Psalm 27 (323 words): The author began by saying that Jehovah was his strength. Therefore, he had no fear, even of fierce adversaries. He asked Jehovah to teach him his way, and not deliver him to his adversaries.

Psalm 28 (201 words): The author asked Jehovah to hear when he cried out to him, and not take him away with the wicked. He said they speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts.

Psalm 29 (163 words): The author tells the sons of the mighty to worship Jehovah. He gave many examples of Jehovah's power in the world. He said Jehovah sits as a King forever.

Psalm 30 (226 words): The author said he would extol Jehovah. He told the sanctified to sing praise to Jehovah and give thanks. He said, **"For his anger is but for a moment. His favor is for a lifetime"** (30:5).

Psalm 31 (502 words): This is a prayer for deliverance. The author asked Jehovah to help him in his distress. He said he heard the slander of many, and they plotted to take away his life. He said, **"But I trusted in thee, O Jehovah. I said, Thou are my God"** (31:14).

Psalm 32 (241 words): This psalm begins, **"Blessed are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."** He said the wicked had many sorrows. But loving kindness would surround the man who trusts in Jehovah. The apostle Paul said David wrote this psalm.

Psalm 33 (348 words): The author said to sing a new song and give thanks to Jehovah with musical instruments. He said, **"He loves righteousness and justice. The earth is full of the loving kindness of Jehovah"** (33:5). And he delivers the soul of those who hope in his loving kindness.

Psalm 34 (334 words): The author said he called for Jehovah and was saved. He said, **"The agent of Jehovah encamps round about those who fear him, and delivers them"** (34:7). He said the man who wants to see good should depart from evil and do good. He said the eyes of Jehovah were toward the righteous,

and he hears their prayer. But he is against those who do evil. He said, **“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but Jehovah delivers him out of them all”** (34:19-20).

Psalm 35 (556 words): This is a prayer asking for Jehovah’s help against the author’s enemies.

Psalm 36 (227 words): This psalm begins by describing the evil mind and behavior of the wicked man. The author asked to be protected from sinners, and said they would be defeated.

Psalm 37 (699 words): This psalm contrasts the righteous with the wicked. The author said not to worry about evildoers, nor be envious of them. He said, **“I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen a righteous man forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”** (37:25). He said Jehovah loves justice. The author said he had seen a wicked man in great power, but later he was gone.

Psalm 38 (354 words): This is a prayer by the author expressing sorrow for his sin.

Psalm 39 (266 words): The author spoke of the shortness of life. He told Jehovah that his hope was in him. He asked Jehovah to hear his prayer. And he said, **“O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go from here, and be no more”** (39:13).

Psalm 40 (406 words): The author began, **“I waited patiently for Jehovah, and he inclined to me, and heard my cry.”** He said the man who trusts Jehovah was blessed. He said the wonderful works of Jehovah were more than could be numbered. He asked that those who sought to destroy his soul be defeated.

Psalm 41 (239 words): This psalm begins, **“Blessed is he who considers a poor man. Jehovah will deliver him in the day of evil.”** He told of the hypocrisy of his enemies. He said, **“Yea, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me”** (41:9). He said Jehovah had mercy upon him.

Psalm 42 (273 words): The author began, **“As the hart pants after the water brooks, so my soul pants after thee, O God.”** He told his soul to hope in God.

Psalm 43 (130 words): The author asked God to deliver him from the deceitful and unjust man. He asked Jehovah to send out his light and truth to lead him.

Psalm 44 (459 words): The author told how God drove out the nations, and gave the land to them. However, God had cast them off. He said they were scattered among the nations. He said, **“Yea, for thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”** (44:22). He asked Jehovah to redeem them for his loving kindness’ sake.

Psalm 45 (322 words): The author said he spoke things about the king. He said the king’s throne was forever. He said he (the king) loved righteousness, and hated wickedness. Therefore God had anointed him above his companions. That is another of many Old Testament scriptures about the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Psalm 46 (201 words): The author said God was our refuge and strength. Therefore we would not fear. He said the nations raged, but when God uttered his voice, the earth melted.

Psalm 47 (134 words): This is a psalm of praise. It begins, **“O clap your hands, all ye peoples. Shout to God with the voice of triumph. For Jehovah Most High is awesome. He is a great King over all the earth.”** The author told how God subdues nations and chooses their inheritance.

Psalm 48 (226 words): This psalm begins, **“Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in his holy mountain.”** Then it praises mount Zion, the city of the great King.

Psalm 49 (336 words): The author asked for all the inhabitants of the earth to listen, and he would speak wisdom. He said that none of those who trust in their wealth could pay God enough so they would not die. He said a man without understanding was like the beasts that perish.

Psalm 50 (398 words): God said to gather his sanctified together to him. He said, **“I will deliver thee, and thou shall glorify me”** (50:15). Then he rebuked the wicked man—the man who hates God’s words. God described some of the evil he did. God said he kept silent when he did them, but he would punish him.

Psalm 51 (326 words): This psalm is a prayer for forgiveness. He said, **“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me”** (51:10). He said God had no pleasure in burnt offerings. He said, **“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou will not despise”** (51:17).

Psalm 52 (172 words): This psalm is a rebuke to the mighty man who devises wickedness. The man who loves evil more than good. The author said God would destroy him forever.

Psalm 53 (150 words): This psalm is almost exactly the same as Psalm 14.

Psalm 54 (116 words): This is a prayer for salvation from enemies. The author said violent men sought his soul, but God was his helper.

Psalm 55 (435 words): The author said he moaned because of the oppression of the wicked. He said, **“O that I had wings like a dove! Then I would fly away, and be at rest”** (55:6). He asked Jehovah to destroy them. He said Jehovah would never allow the righteous man to be moved.

Psalm 56 (232 words): This psalm is a plea for deliverance. The author said there were many who fought proudly against him. He said all their thoughts were against him for evil. He said, **“In God I have put my trust. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”** (56:11).

Psalm 57 (231 words): This psalm begins, **“Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for my soul takes refuge in thee.”** He said his soul was among lions—sons of men, whose teeth and tongue were weapons. He said he praised God.

Psalm 58 (210 words): The author asked if the sons of men judged uprightly. He said no, they worked wickedness in their hearts, and violence with their hands. He asked God to break their teeth, and melt them away like water. He said a righteous man would rejoice when he saw the vengeance.

Psalm 59 (346 words): This psalm is a prayer for deliverance from wicked enemies. He said they howled like a dog, with swords in their lips. He said, **“But thou, O Jehovah, will laugh at them. Thou will have all the nations in derision”** (59:8).

Psalm 60 (209 words): The psalm begins, **“O God thou have cast us off. Thou have broken us down. Thou have been angry. O restore us again.”** The author asked God to answer and save his beloved ones.

Psalm 61 (133 words): The author began, **“Hear my cry, O God. Attend to my prayer.”** He said God had been his strong tower from the enemy, and he would sing praise to his name forever.

Psalm 62 (227 words): The author said that God was his only salvation. He spoke of evil men who delight in lies. They bless with their mouth, but curse inwardly. He said Jehovah would render to every man according to his work.

Psalm 63 (198 words): This psalm begins, **“O God, thou are my God. I will earnestly seek thee.”** The author said he would praise him, because his loving kindness was better than life. He said God had been his help, but those who sought to destroy his soul would perish.

Psalm 64 (186 words): This psalm is a prayer for deliverance from evil enemies. He said they use their tongues like a sword, even bitter words, to secretly attack a blameless man. He said, however, that God would shoot at them, and they would stumble.

Psalm 65 (262 words): The author said Jehovah hears prayers, and forgives transgressions. He said the man Jehovah chooses was blessed. And he spoke of his power over the mountains and the seas.

Psalm 66 (318 words): This is a psalm of praise. The author said all the earth would worship God. He spoke of God’s power and rule. He asked all who fear God to come, and he would declare what he had done for his soul.

Psalm 67 (109 words): This psalm tells the nations to be glad and sing for joy. It tells all peoples to praise God. And it says God will bless us.

Psalm 68 (660 words): This psalm begins, **“Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered.”** The author said to let the wicked perish, but the righteous be glad. He spoke of God’s blessings to his people during their Exodus and conquest of kings. He spoke of the supremacy of Jehovah. He said all kingdoms would sing to God and ascribe strength to him.

Psalm 69 (676 words): The author asked God to save him. He said he was weary with his crying. He said those who hated him without a cause were more than the hairs of his head. He pleaded with Jehovah to answer his prayer, and deliver him from those who hated him. He asked that they be blotted out of the book of life. He said he was poor and sorrowful, and he asked God to set him up on high. Both Peter and Paul said David wrote this psalm.

Psalm 70 (102 words): This is a prayer for help. The author asked that those who sought after his soul be shamed and confounded. He asked that all who seek God rejoice and be glad in him.

Psalm 71 (473 words): The author asked Jehovah to rescue him from the wicked and cruel man. He asked him not to forsake him when his strength failed. He asked that the adversaries of his soul be covered with reproach and dishonor. He said he would praise Jehovah, and would tell of his righteousness and salvation.

Psalm 72 (361 words): The author of this psalm asked God to bless the king and his son. He said he would judge his people with righteousness. He said he would save the souls of the needy, and save them from oppression and violence.

Psalm 73 (415 words): The author said God was good to the pure in heart, but he had been envious of the prosperity of the wicked. Then he gave a vivid description of what they are like. And he said they always prospered and possessed wealth. So he asked himself why he remained innocent, because he was always suffering. Yet when he thought to understand, he said it was too painful for him, until he considered their latter end. He said God had put them in slippery places, so they would become desolate in a moment, consumed with terrors.

Psalm 74 (414 words): This psalm is a lamentation. The author asked God if he had cast off forever. He spoke of the desolation of the land. He told how they had destroyed God's sanctuary (the temple). He asked God how long the adversary would reproach and blaspheme.

Psalm 75 (191 words): The author began by giving thanks to God. Then he spoke to the arrogant and the wicked, telling them to cease. He said the horns of the wicked would be cut off, but the horns of the righteous would be lifted up.

Psalm 76 (197 words): This psalm says that God is greater than the mighty. He asked who could stand when God was angry.

Psalm 77 (327 words): The author said that in the day of his trouble he sought Jehovah. He asked if Jehovah would cast off forever, and had forgotten to be gracious. He spoke of the thunder and lightning, and the trembling of the earth when God led his people by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Psalm 78 (1209 words): This is the second longest psalm in the Bible. The author said that God established a testimony, and appointed a law in Israel. He said not to be as their fathers, who were a stubborn and rebellious generation. Then he spoke of their history as a nation. He said God did marvelous things in the sight of their fathers, yet **“How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness, and grieved him in the desert!”** (78:40). He told how God drove out nations to give them their inheritance, but they rebelled. He said, **“When God heard, he was angry, and greatly abhorred Israel”** (78:59). He said Jehovah gave them over to the sword, but then he smote his adversaries.

Psalm 79 (276 words): This psalm tells how Jerusalem was destroyed. And the author asked Jehovah if he would be angry forever. He asked for mercy, deliverance, and forgiveness.

Psalm 80 (327 words): The author called upon God to come and save them. He spoke of Israel as a vine that God brought out of Egypt. He planted it and it grew strong. Then he asked God why he had broken down its walls so that all who passed by plucked it. He asked God to look at his vine and save them.

Psalm 81 (276 words): God said he was Jehovah, and his people should worship no foreign god. However, they would not listen, so he let them go after the stubbornness of their heart. Then he said, **“O that my people would hearken to me, that Israel would walk in my ways!”** (81:13). He said he would subdue their enemies, and make them prosperous.

Psalm 82 (117 words): The author said that God judges among the gods. And he asked how long they would judge unjustly. Then he said, **“I said, Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High. Nevertheless ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the rulers”** (82:6-7).

Psalm 83 (270 words): The author asked God not to keep silent, because of all those who hated him. He said they plot to destroy Israel. Then he asked God to defeat them as he had former enemies. That way they would know that Jehovah is the Most High over all the earth.

Psalm 84 (229 words): The author told of the blessedness of those who dwell in Jehovah’s house, and whose strength was in him. He said Jehovah would withhold no good thing from those who walk worthily.

Psalm 85 (200 words): The author said Jehovah had brought back the captives of Jacob. He had forgiven the iniquity of his people. But they should not turn again to folly.

Psalm 86 (318 words): This is a prayer for mercy and help. The author said there was none like Jehovah among the gods. He said, **“Teach me thy way, O Jehovah, I will walk in thy truth. Unite my heart to fear thy name”** (86:11). He said he would praise him with his whole heart. He said violent men sought after his soul, but Jehovah helped him.

Psalm 87 (111 words): The author said, **“Jehovah loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob”** (87:2). He praised the city (of Jerusalem), saying it was an honor to be born there.

Psalm 88 (309 words): The author said his soul was full of troubles. He said he was as a man who had no help. He said his eye wasted away because of affliction. He asked why Jehovah had cast off his soul, and hid his face from him.

Psalm 89 (864 words): The author began by saying he would sing of the loving kindness of Jehovah forever. He spoke of the wonder and power of Jehovah. He said, **“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne. Loving kindness and truth go before thy face”** (89:14). He spoke of the blessedness of the people who rejoiced in his name and his righteousness. The author said that God was angry, and had rejected his anointed. He said Jehovah exalted the right hand of his adversaries, and caused his defeat in battle. Then he asked if Jehovah would hide himself forever. He asked Jehovah to remember the reproach of his servants. And he praised Jehovah.

Psalm 90 (322 words): The author said that before the world was made God was from everlasting to everlasting. He said a thousand years in his sight was but as yesterday when it is past. He compared the sons of men to grass, which grows and then perishes.

Psalm 91 (285 words): The author said Jehovah was his refuge and his fortress in whom he trusted. He said Jehovah would protect him from all harm. Then Jehovah said he would deliver him because he had set his love upon him.

Psalm 92 (248 words): The author said it was a good thing to give thanks to Jehovah. He said, **“How great are thy works, O Jehovah! Thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knows**

**not, nor does a fool understand this”** (92:5-6). He said the wicked live and die like grass. He said God had blessed him.

Psalm 93 (88 words): The author praised Jehovah, and said he was from everlasting. He said Jehovah’s testimonies were very sure.

Psalm 94 (342 words): The author began, **“O Jehovah, thou God to whom vengeance belongs, thou God to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth. Render to the proud a recompense.”** He asked how long the wicked would triumph. He said Jehovah would cut off the wicked in their own wickedness.

Psalm 95 (194 words): Jehovah warned not to harden their heart as their fathers. He said forty years long he was grieved with that generation, because they erred in their heart. He said, **“Therefore I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest”** (95:11). The book of Hebrews says David wrote this psalm.

Psalm 96 (214 words): The author said for all the earth to sing to Jehovah. He said all the gods of the peoples were idols, but Jehovah made the heavens. He said the heavens should be glad, and the earth rejoice. He said Jehovah will judge the world with righteousness and truth.

Psalm 97 (193 words): The author said that Jehovah reigns. And he said righteousness and justice were the foundation of his throne. He said, **“Bow yourselves to him, all ye gods”** (97:7). He told all who love Jehovah to hate evil.

Psalm 98 (167 words): The author said to sing to Jehovah a new song, for he had done marvelous things.

Psalm 99 (150 words): The author said that Jehovah reigns, and all the peoples should tremble. He said they should praise his great and awesome name.

Psalm 100 (82 words): The author said Jehovah made us, and we should serve him with gladness. He said, **“For Jehovah is good. His loving kindness is forever, and his faithfulness to all generations”** (100:5).

Psalm 101 (177 words): The author said he would sing of loving kindness and justice. He said he would behave himself wisely, and walk with a perfect heart. He told of ways he would oppose evil. The author spoke as having the authority of a king; most likely he was David.

Psalm 102 (452 words): The author asked Jehovah to answer his prayer speedily in the day of his distress. He said his days were consumed away like smoke. He said, **“My enemies reproach me all the day. Those who are mad against me do curse by me”** (102:8). He said God created the heavens and the earth. He said, **“They shall perish, but thou shall endure”** (26).

Psalm 103 (335 words): The author said not to forget all Jehovah’s benefits, and then he mentioned several of them. He said Jehovah made his ways known to Moses, and his doings to the sons of Israel. He said Jehovah would not always chide. He said, **“For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his loving kindness toward those who fear him. ... Like as a father pities his sons, So Jehovah pities those who fear him”** (103:11-12). Those are beautiful words of encouragement.

Psalm 104 (577 words): The author said Jehovah stretches out the heavens like a curtain. He told how God covered the earth with water. Then at his rebuke, **“The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which thou had founded for them”** (104:8). He spoke of many things that God does in the world to care for it. Then he said, **“O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom have thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches”** (104:24).

Psalm 105 (622 words): This psalm begins by praising Jehovah. The author told the seed of Abraham to remember the marvelous works of Jehovah. He told about Jehovah’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them the land. Then he reviewed their history, from the time they were a few sojourners in it until they possessed it.

Psalm 106 (755 words): The author praised Jehovah, and said, **“Blessed are those who keep justice, and he who does righteousness at all times”** (106:3). Then he told of their many acts of rebellion. He said they shed innocent blood by sacrificing their sons and daughters to idols. Therefore the wrath of Jehovah was kindled against his people. He said he gave them into the hand of their enemies. He said many times Jehovah delivered them, but they were rebellious. Then he asked Jehovah to save them, and gather them from among the nations.

Psalm 107 (688 words): The author described four ways that men got in trouble: (1) those who became lost in the wilderness, (2) those who were bound because of rebellion against the words of

God, (3) fools who came near death because of their sins, and (4) seamen caught in a fierce storm. He said each time they cried out to Jehovah, and he saved them. After each example he said, **“O that men would praise Jehovah for his loving kindness, and for his wonderful works to the sons of men!”**

Psalm 108 (210 words): Half of this psalm is found in Psalm 57, and half is found in Psalm 60.

Psalm 109 (534 words): The author began by pleading to God for deliverance from wicked men. He said they used deceitful words of hatred against him. And they rewarded him evil for good, and hatred for his love. Then he called for several curses against them. He asked Jehovah to deliver him, because he was poor and needy. He said he would give thanks to Jehovah and praise him. Peter said David wrote this psalm.

Psalm 110 (135 words): This psalm begins, **“Jehovah says to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”** He spoke of the conquering power of **“my Lord”** (meaning the Messiah). And he said his priesthood would be forever. Jesus said David wrote this psalm.

Psalm 111 (167 words): The author said he would give thanks to Jehovah with his whole heart. He said, **“The works of his hands are truth and justice”** (111:7). He said, **“The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom, and all who act accordingly have a good understanding”** (111:10).

Psalm 112 (168 words): This psalm praises the man who fears Jehovah, and delights greatly in his commandments. The author tells of the many blessings of such a man. Then he said the wicked man would see it, and be grieved.

Psalm 113 (132 words): This is a psalm of praise to Jehovah. He said Jehovah’s seat was on high, yet he looks upon low things. He said he raises up a poor man that he may set him with rulers.

Psalm 114 (104 words): The author said when Israel went forth out of Egypt the sea and Jordan moved back, and the mountains skipped like rams. He said the earth should tremble at the presence of Jehovah.

Psalm 115 (262 words): The author said Jehovah was in the heavens, and has done whatever he pleased. He said idols had various parts of the body, none of which functioned. He said, **“Those who make them shall be like them”** (115:8). He said, **“The**

**heavens are the heavens of Jehovah, but the earth he has given to the sons of men” (115:16).**

Psalm 116 (269 words): The author began, **“I love Jehovah because he hears my voice and my supplications.”** He said Jehovah was gracious and righteous, and saved him when he was brought low. He said, **“Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his sanctified” (116:15).**

Psalm 117 (29 words): This psalm praises Jehovah.

Psalm 118 (446 words): The author praised Jehovah. He said he called upon Jehovah out of his distress, and he answered him. He said Jehovah had chastened him greatly, but had not given him over to death. Then he said, **“The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is Jehovah’s doing. It is marvelous in our eyes” (118:22-23).** And he asked Jehovah to save.

Psalm 119 (2427 words): This is the longest psalm in the Bible. It is more than twice the length of Psalm 78, which is the second longest. The major subject of the psalm is the author’s love for the laws of God. Many and varied are his expressions of that sentiment. He often asked Jehovah to teach him, and give him understanding of his commandments. He also told of the hostility and lawlessness of the wicked. And he often told of his affliction, and asked for God’s mercy. He said before he was afflicted he went astray. Therefore, it was good for him that he was afflicted, so he would learn his laws.

Psalm 120 (89 words): The author asked Jehovah to deliver his soul from a deceitful tongue. He said, **“I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war” (120:7).**

Psalm 121 (105 words): The author asked from where his help would come. Then he said it was from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 122 (124 words): This is a psalm of praise for Jerusalem. The author began, **“I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of Jehovah.”** He said we should pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Psalm 123 (91 words): The author said he lifted up his eyes to him who sits in the heavens. He asked for mercy, because they were filled with the contempt of the proud.

Psalm 124 (121 words): The author said Israel should say if it had not been Jehovah who was on their side when men rose up against them, then they would have been swallowed up alive. And he praised God for his salvation.

Psalm 125 (104 words): The author began, **“Those who trust in Jehovah are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.”** He asked Jehovah to do good to those who are good.

Psalm 126 (90 words): This is a psalm of rejoicing for those who returned to Zion from their captivity (at Babylonian).

Psalm 127 (108 words): The author began, **“Unless Jehovah builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless Jehovah guards the city, the watchman wake but in vain.”** He also told of the blessing of sons, which were a heritage of Jehovah.

Psalm 128 (94 words): The author told of the blessedness of all who fear Jehovah and walk in his ways.

Psalm 129 (122 words): The author said, **“Let Israel now say, Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth up, yet they have not prevailed against me.”** He said Jehovah was righteous, and he had cut apart the cords of the wicked.

Psalm 130 (103 words): The author began, **“Out of the depths I have cried to thee, O Jehovah.”** He said there was forgiveness with Jehovah, that he may be feared. He said his soul waited for Jehovah, and hoped in his word.

Psalm 131 (61 words): The author said his heart was not haughty. He told Israel to hope in Jehovah forever.

Psalm 132 (272 words): The author asked Jehovah to remember for David all his affliction. And how he swore to Jehovah and vowed, saying he would not sleep until he found out a place for Jehovah. The author said they would go into his tabernacles, and worship at his footstool.

Psalm 133 (65 words): The author said, **“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head ... . For there Jehovah commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”**

Psalm 134 (42 words): This psalm praises Jehovah.

Psalm 135 (311 words): The author said the servants of Jehovah who stand in the house of Jehovah should praise him, for Jehovah is good. He said Jehovah had chosen Israel for his own possession. He mentioned the wonders he did in Egypt, and his destruction of many nations and mighty kings. He said he gave the land as a heritage to Israel his people.

Psalm 136 (348 words): This psalm has a very unique style. Twenty-six statements are made. Each is followed by the clause, **“for his loving kindness is forever.”** He said Jehovah alone does great wonders. He mentioned how by his power God brought about things of the Creation, the Exodus, and the conquest of their land. He said Jehovah remembered them in their lowliness, and delivered them from their adversaries. He ended, **“O give thanks to the God of heaven, for his loving kindness is forever”** (136:26).

Psalm 137 (161 words): The author began, **“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.”** He said their captors required them to sing for them songs of Zion. Then he said, **“How shall we sing Jehovah’s song in a foreign land?”** (137:4).

Psalm 138 (175 words): The author said he would give thanks to Jehovah with his whole heart. He said Jehovah would revive him in the midst of trouble, and save him.

Psalm 139 (406 words): The author said that God knew all about him, even his thoughts. He said that such knowledge was too wonderful for him. He said there was nowhere he could go away from God’s spirit. He said that God formed his inward parts, and covered him in his mother’s womb. He said God’s thoughts were precious to him. Then he spoke of the wicked, and he said he hated them with perfect hatred. He asked God to search his heart, and try him. He ended, **“And lead me in the way everlasting”** (139:24)

Psalm 140 (243 words): This is a prayer for deliverance from the evil man. The author said they had sharpened their tongue like a serpent, and had set snares for him. He said, **“Let burning coals fall upon them. Let them be cast into the fire”** (140:10). He said he knew that Jehovah would maintain the cause of the afflicted man, and justice for the needy.

Psalm 141 (202 words): The author began, **“Jehovah, I have called upon thee. Make haste to me.”** Then he asked Jehovah

to make him righteous. He ended, **“Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass over”** (141:10).

Psalm 142 (146 words): The author began by pleading with Jehovah for help. He asked Jehovah to attend to his cry, and deliver him from his persecutors.

Psalm 143 (255 words): The author asked Jehovah to hear his prayer, and not judge him. He said, **“For in thy sight no man living is righteous”** (143:2). He said the enemy had persecuted his soul, and smitten his life down to the ground. He said, **“In thy righteousness bring my soul out of trouble”** (143:11).

Psalm 144 (267 words): The author praised Jehovah, his rock, who taught his hands to war. Among other things, he called him his loving kindness, his fortress, and his deliverer.

Psalm 145 (322 words): This is a psalm of praise to God. The author said he would always praise Jehovah. He said Jehovah preserves all those who love him, but he will destroy all the wicked. He said all flesh should bless the holy name of Jehovah forever and ever.

Psalm 146 (166 words): The author began, **“Praise ye Jehovah. Praise Jehovah, O my soul.”** He said not to put trust in men, for they perish. He said God made the world, and keeps truth forever.

Psalm 147 (291 words): The author began, **“Praise ye Jehovah, for it is good to sing praises to our God.”** He said Jehovah upholds the meek, but brings the wicked down to the ground. He said to sing to Jehovah with thanksgiving.

Psalm 148 (176 words): The author urged all things to praise Jehovah. He listed many kinds of things and people, and said they should all praise Jehovah.

Psalm 149 (139 words): The author said the sanctified should exult in glory. He said the high praises of God were in their mouth. And a two-edged sword was in their hand to execute vengeance and punishment upon the nations.

Psalm 150 (74 words): This is a psalm of praise to Jehovah. The author said, **“Let everything that has breath praise Jehovah”** (150:6).

## A Description of Proverbs

This book was written by the wise king Solomon. Its purpose is to teach wisdom and understanding, especially to the young. Many times Solomon urged the reader to listen and learn. And many times he warned against the ways of sin and folly. Solomon often addressed the reader as “my son.” God is the ultimate author of the words, and we are his sons. Therefore, we should accept them as spoken by our heavenly Father to us.

Solomon said that fear of Jehovah was the beginning of knowledge. He said the foolish despise wisdom and instruction. Then he warned against joining sinners who use violence to prey upon others. He said they promise to get much loot, but it would destroy them.

Solomon personified wisdom as a woman. He said she asks, **“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And scoffers delight them in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge?”** (Proverbs 1:22). She said she would teach them. She said if they refused, she would laugh at their calamity when it came upon them as a whirlwind. She said they would call upon her then, but it would be too late.

Solomon told his son to search for wisdom as for hidden treasures. He said wisdom would be pleasant to his soul. He said it would protect him from crooked men who love to do evil. He said it would also protect him from the adulterous woman. And he would walk in the way of good men. He said they would dwell in the land, but the wicked would be rooted out of it.

He said to his son, **“Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths”** (Proverbs 3:5-6). He also told him not to despise the chastening of Jehovah. He said, **“For whom Jehovah loves he reproveth, and he whips every son whom he receives”** (Proverbs 3:12).

He said wisdom and understanding were better than silver and gold. He said, **“Wisdom is the principal thing. Get wisdom, yea, with all thy getting get understanding”** (Proverbs 4:7). He said that if he loved and exalted her, she would promote him, and bring him to honor. And he warned him again not to walk in the way of evil men. He said they could not even sleep unless they did evil. He

said their way is darkness, and they do not know what will cause them to stumble.

He also said, **“Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life”** (Proverbs 4:23). Then he warned again about the adulteress. He said her lips drop honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword. He said to rejoice in the wife of thy youth, a lovely maiden. He said to be satisfied with her affection. For Jehovah sees all the ways of a man. He also warned of the man with a perverse mouth, who signals with his eyes and feet, and devises evil continually. He said he would suddenly be broken without remedy.

Solomon said there were six things that Jehovah hates, yea seven which are an abomination to him. They are **“haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked purposes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness who utters lies, and he who sows discord among brothers”** (Proverbs 6:17-19).

Then wisdom spoke again. She said nothing could compare with her. She said kings and rulers functioned by her. She told of all the many blessings she brings. She said he who finds her finds life, and will obtain favor of Jehovah. She said all who hated her love death.

Then he described the foolish woman. He said she is clamorous, simple, and ignorant. He said she sits at the door of her house calling to those who are passing by. She says, **“He who is simple, let him turn in here. ... Stolen waters are sweet, and bread in secret is pleasant”** (Proverbs 9:16-17). He said such a man does not know that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

I would compare her to the carnivorous pitcher plant. It secretes a fragrant but intoxicating and slippery nectar. The nectar lures flies into a trap full of digestive fluid. The charm of the adulteress is like that deadly nectar.

After that about six hundred proverbs are listed. They are the major part of the book. The list begins with the words, **“The proverbs of Solomon”** (Proverbs 10:1) There are too many to summarize. Therefore, I chose a few of them for examples. Here are those I selected:

- **“... he who refrains his lips does wisely”** (Proverbs 10:19).
- **“It is as sport to a fool to do mischief”** (Proverbs 10:23).

- **“The hypocrite destroys his neighbor with his mouth”** (Proverbs 11:9). Words can be used as destructive weapons.
- **“The merciful man does good to his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh”** (Proverbs 11:17).
- **“A ring of gold in a swine’s snout, is a beautiful woman who is without discretion”** (Proverbs 11:22).
- **“The generous soul shall be made prosperous”** (Proverbs 11:25).
- **“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who is wise hearkens to counsel”** (Proverbs 12:15).
- **“Heaviness in the heart of a man makes it droop, but a good word makes it glad”** (Proverbs 12:25).
- **“He who guards his mouth keeps his life. He who opens wide his lips shall have destruction”** (Proverbs 13:3).
- **“Walk with wise men, and thou shall be wise. But the companion of fools shall smart for it”** (Proverbs 13:20).
- **“Much food is in the tillage of the poor, but there is that is consumed because of injustice”** (Proverbs 13:23).
- **“He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him chastens him promptly”** (Proverbs 13:24).
- **“Every wise woman builds her house, but a foolish woman plucks it down with her own hands”** (Proverbs 14:1).
- **“There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”** (Proverbs 14:12).
- **“A simple man believes every word”** (Proverbs 14:15).
- **“He who is slow to anger is of great understanding”** (Proverbs 14:29).
- **“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people”** (Proverbs 14:34).
- **“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a grievous word stirs up anger”** (Proverbs 15:1).
- **“A scoffer does not like to be reproved. He will not go to the wise”** (Proverbs 15:12).
- **“Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted ox and hatred with it”** (Proverbs 15:17).
- **“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but Jehovah weighs the spirits”** (Proverbs 16:2).
- **“Jehovah has made everything for its own end, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil”** (Proverbs 16:4).
- **“Better is a little, with righteousness, than great revenues with injustice”** (Proverbs 16:8).

- **“Pride is before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”** (Proverbs 16:18).
- **“... a whisperer separates chief friends”** (Proverbs 16:28). Destructive gossip and slander are very common in these evil times, even by those claiming to be Christians.
- **“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty”** (Proverbs 16:32).
- **“The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah”** (Proverbs 16:33).
- **“A bribe is a precious stone in the eyes of him who has it; wherever it turns, it prospers”** (Proverbs 17:8). Bribery is widely used in the world, because it is an easy way to get people to do what you want. However, it is unjust, and God will punish those who use it.
- **“He who rewards evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house”** (Proverbs 17:13).
- **“He who justifies a wicked man, and he who condemns a righteous man, both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah”** (Proverbs 17:15). That proverb describes many people in modern America. But they will face the great judgment day.
- **“Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility”** (Proverbs 18:12).
- **“He who pleads his case first seems just, but his neighbor comes and searches him out”** (Proverbs 18:17). Remember that when you hear one man complain about another.
- **“He who has pity upon a poor man lends to Jehovah, and he will repay him his good deed”** (Proverbs 19:17).
- **“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying”** (Proverbs 19:18).
- **“Smite a scoffer, and a simple man will learn prudence”** (Proverbs 19:25). Public punishment helps discourage others from doing wrong.
- **“It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarrelling”** (Proverbs 20:3).
- **“The sluggard will not plow because of the winter. Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing”** (Proverbs 20:4). Our pagan socialist government robs laborers (by taxes) to support lazy men. God’s justice is often defeated by sinners—until the great judgment day.
- **“It is bad, it is bad, says the buyer, but when he is gone his way, then he boasts”** (Proverbs 20:14).

- **“The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is the hoary head”** (Proverbs 20:29). The hoary head symbolizes wisdom acquired with age.
- **“Stripes that wound cleanse away evil, and strokes, the innermost parts”** (Proverbs 20:30). Outlawing spanking and other forms of corporal punishment has contributed to the rapid growth of evil in America.
- **“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but Jehovah weighs the hearts”** (Proverbs 21:2).
- **“He who loves pleasure shall be a poor man”** (Proverbs 21:17).
- **“It is better to dwell in a desert land, than with a contentious and fretful woman”** (Proverbs 21:19).
- **“The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but victory is from Jehovah”** (Proverbs 21:31).
- **“Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it”** (Proverbs 22:6).
- **“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him”** (Proverbs 22:15).
- **“Weary not thyself to be rich. Out of thine own wisdom, cease”** (Proverbs 23:4).
- **“Speak not in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words”** (Proverbs 23:9).
- **“Withhold not correction from the child, *for* if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from Sheol”** (Proverbs 23:13-14). However, it will make you a criminal in many places of the world, including pagan America. The prophet Isaiah warned about calling good evil (see Isaiah 5:20).
- **“Be not among winebibbers, among gluttonous eaters of flesh”** (Proverbs 23:20).

Pagan America has become a land full of drunkards and gluttons. This sinful world sympathizes with drunks. The truth is, a drunkard is a fool who willingly destroys his life to feel good for a few moments. Modern disciples of the devil excuse such men. Indeed, they comfort and support them.

Here is how the Bible describes the drunkard: **“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long at the wine. Those who go to seek out mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it**

sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly. At the end it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange things, and thy heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shall be as he who lies down in the midst of the sea, or as he who lies upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *thou shall say*, and I was not hurt. They have beaten me, and I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again” (Proverbs 23:29-35).

Here are more of Solomon’s proverbs:

- **“Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbor’s house, lest he be weary of thee, and hate thee”** (Proverbs 25:17).
- **“A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools”** (Proverbs 26:3).
- **“... a flattering mouth works ruin”** (Proverbs 26:28).
- **“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are profuse”** (Proverbs 27:6).
- **“He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be considered a curse to him”** (Proverbs 27:14).
- **“Iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend”** (Proverbs 27:17). Healthy competition can improve both sides.
- **“A wicked man flees when no man pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion”** (Proverbs 28:1).
- **“Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them”** (Proverbs 28:4).
- **“The rich man is wise in his own conceit, but a poor man who has understanding searches him out”** (Proverbs 28:11).
- **“He who rebukes a man shall afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue”** (Proverbs 28:23).
- **“He who, being often reprovved, hardens his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”** (Proverbs 29:1).
- **“A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his steps”** (Proverbs 29:5).
- **“The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself causes shame to his mother”** (Proverbs 29:15).

In the last part of Proverbs a man named Lemuel described an ideal woman. He said, **“A worthy woman who can find? For her price is far above rubies”** (Proverbs 31:10). Lemuel then gave a beautiful description of her life, a model for all women. He said she was a

blessing to her husband. He said she was wise and industrious. He said she was generous to the needy. And she looked well to the ways of her household. He said her sons and her husband praised her.

He ended with these words: **“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears Jehovah, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates”** (Proverbs 31:29-31).

### A Description of **Ecclesiastes**

This book was written by Solomon. It begins, **“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.”** The book is mostly about the nature of the world, which he called “things under the sun.” He began, **“Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity”** (Ecclesiastes 1:3). That means everything about the world is futile and pointless. Then in the rest of the book he tells how bad the world is. And indeed, compared with heaven it truly is. Therefore, dear reader, do not dismiss his conclusions, as most people do. The older and wiser you become, the more you will realize we cannot put our hope in this life. It is filled with pain and sorrows, and sooner or later we all die and lose everything. Real hope is for the greater world promised by Jesus Christ.

Solomon said things of the world cycle in a constant pattern, like day and night. He said that generations come and go. For example, in a little over a hundred years everyone in the world today will be dead. He said all things were full of inexpressible weariness. People drink liquor and take drugs to escape it. But doing that too much destroys them. Solomon said, **“It is a great tribulation that God has given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith”** (Ecclesiastes 1:13).

He said he tried to use wisdom to search all that is done under heaven. Then he said, **“I perceived that this also was a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much grief, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow”** (Ecclesiastes 1:17-18). The more a man knows about this world, the more frustrated and disappointed he will become, because it is so full of evil and unfairness.

Solomon said he tried to find what was good for the sons of men to do during their lives. He said he tried pleasure, and he build great

works, such as houses and gardens and pools. He had many servants, and he collected silver and gold. He got singers and things of luxury, and many wives. He said whatever he wanted he got. Then he looked at all his works, and said, “... **all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun**” (Ecclesiastes 2:11).

He even said he hated life, because he would have to leave everything he worked for to another man after he died. He said there was nothing better for a man than to eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labor. He said that was from the hand of God, “**For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, without him?**” (Ecclesiastes 2:25).

Then he said, “**For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven**” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). And he mentioned examples, such as, killing and healing, breaking down and building up, weeping and laughing, keeping and casting away, being silent and speaking, loving and hating, war and peace. And he said God had made everything beautiful in its time. Yet does not everything beautiful in this world eventually turn to ugliness?

The Preacher said he even saw wickedness in the place of justice and righteousness. But he also said God was going to judge the righteous man and the wicked man, for there was a purpose for everything. He said God was proving to men that in themselves they are beasts, and they die just like them.

Solomon taught that as a general rule sinners are punished and the righteous are rewarded. Nevertheless, he said righteousness was no sure protection against evil. Indeed, he said, “**There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs *his life* in his evildoing**” (Ecclesiastes 7:15).

He gave another example of the natural injustice of the world, when he said, “**I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong ... but time and chance happens to them all**” (Ecclesiastes 9:11). In other words, the best men do not always win. He said men were like fish taken in an evil net, or birds caught in the snare, when an evil time suddenly falls upon them.

Solomon said that life was a pleasant thing. And if a man lived many years he should rejoice in them all. But he should remember the days of darkness, for they would be many. Then he warned a

young man about how he chooses to live. He said he was free to chose carnal ways, but God will judge him for all those things.

Then he said, **“Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them”** (Ecclesiastes 12:1). And he gave a poetic description of the many failures of the body with old age.

The book says the Preacher was wise, and taught the people knowledge. Then he said, **“And furthermore, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh”** (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Finally, he gave his conclusion: **“This is the end of the matter, all has been heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether good or evil”** (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

### A Description of Song of Solomon

This book is about love between a man and his wife. The example here can help make every marriage better. However, it contains much figurative language, and so is often hard to interpret. It seems to be about Solomon and his wife, but it must describe his first marriage, before he got so many wives and they led him astray from God.

After the title, the book begins by saying, **“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine.”** The woman said the king had brought her into his chambers. Her husband praised her beauty, and she said he was like perfume to her. Then he spoke again of her beauty, saying, **“Behold, thou are fair, my love, behold thou are fair. Thine eyes are doves”** (Song of Solomon 1:15). However, she was modest, saying she was a lily of the valleys, meaning ordinary. He said that among the daughters she was as a lily among thorns, meaning very special.

She spoke of how pleasant was his love for her. She said she sat down under his shadow with great delight. She told how he embraced her. Then she urged young women not to awaken the forces of (amorous) love until it was right. How often young women become emotionally attached to a man prematurely. And it leaves deep emotional scars when the relationship fails.

Then she said she heard the voice of her beloved coming to her.

He said, **“Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past. The rain is over and gone”** (Song of Solomon 2:10-11). The winter and rain may symbolize their separation. He went on to describe the flowers and fruit of the springtime, which may symbolize the joy of their being together.

After that Solomon again told his wife of her beauty. He compared parts of her body to different things of nature. For example, he said her eyes were doves behind her veil, and her neck was like the tower of David. Then he compared her to a private garden full of lovely fruits and flora. And they both spoke of enjoying it.

Then she told of being asleep when her beloved knocked for her to open. She first said she was not prepared for him. But then her heart was drawn to him. So she opened, but he had withdrawn himself. Then she went out to search for him. She pleaded with the daughters of Jerusalem to help her find him. They asked her why he was so special. So she described his beauty by comparing parts of his body with things in the world. She said, **“Yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem”** (Song of Solomon 5:16).

Then he returned, and described to her again about her beauty. And he said, **“How fair and how pleasant thou art, O love, for delights!”** (Song of Solomon 7:6). He said her stature was like a palm tree, and he would climb up into it, taking hold of the branches of it.

Then one of them said, **“Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm”** (Song of Solomon 8:6). That probably means their relationship should be deep and permanent, because it was followed by this reason: **“For love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as Sheol. The flashes of it are flashes of fire, a most vehement flame”** (Song of Solomon 8:6).

After that it tells of a little sister they were preparing for the day she would be spoken for, meaning offered in marriage. Then it says that Solomon had a vineyard, which he let out to keepers. His wife also had a vineyard, and she gave him her profit from it. The book ends with a plea by his wife that he come quickly to her. She said, **“Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices”** (Song of Solomon 8:14).

## A Description of Isaiah

There are many wonderful things in this book. And it contains many prophesies about the Christ. However, parts of it are very difficult to understand. The book begins by saying it is the vision of Isaiah which he saw about Judah and Jerusalem. He saw it during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. They were kings of Judah. Then the book says Jehovah rebuked his nation. He said they were a sinful nation that despised him and dealt corruptly. He compared them to Sodom and Gomorrah.

He said he hated their times of worship. He said he would not hear their prayers, because their hands were full of blood. He told them to wash themselves, and put away their evil deeds. He told them to learn to do good. He said if they were willing and obedient he would make them prosperous. Otherwise they would be devoured with the sword.

Then he said of Jerusalem, **“How the faithful city has become a harlot! She who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers”** (Isaiah 1:21). Does that not describe our own capital city now? Jehovah said he was going to take vengeance against his enemies. He would clean out the trash, and restore judges like the first. And they would be called the city of righteousness.

He said the time was coming when all the nations would flow to Jehovah’s house. Many peoples would go there and asked to be taught his ways. He also said the word of Jehovah would go forth from Jerusalem. Jehovah said he would judge between the nations. Then he spoke these oft-quoted words: **“For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”** (Isaiah 2:3-4). He may have been referring to the heavenly Jerusalem described in Revelation 21.

Then Jehovah asked his people to come and walk in his light. He said he had forsaken them because they joined with pagans. He said their land was full of idols, and they all bowed down to them. However, he also said they would cast them away when Jehovah shakes the earth. He said he was going to take away all the well-trained

men, and babies would rule over them. He said the country would be in such bad shape that nobody would want to be a ruler.

He said to tell the righteous it would be well with them, for they would eat the fruit of what they were doing. But woe to the wicked, for what his hands had done would be done to him. Then he said, **“As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, those who lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths”** (Isaiah 3:12).

Then Jehovah rebuked the elders and rulers. He said to them, **“What do ye mean that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor?”** (Isaiah 3:15). I rejoice that my country still cares for the poor. Then he rebuked the daughters of Zion for being haughty. He said they walked with wanton eyes, mincing as they went. He said he was going to take away their beauty, and give them ugliness instead. He said their men would fall by the sword, and they would become desperate for a husband.

Then Jehovah uttered six curses against his people because of their sins. Here are the last three: **“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe to those who are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink, who justify the wicked for rewards, and take away the justice of the righteous man from him!”** (Isaiah 5:20-23).

He said they rejected the law of Jehovah. Therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against his people. He said their dead bodies would be like garbage in the streets. Isaiah said Jehovah was going to call for fierce nations against them. They would roar as lions, and carry away the prey.

Then Isaiah told of a vision of Jehovah sitting high upon a throne. The seraphim stood above him, each having six wings. He said they cried out to each other, **“Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory”** (Isaiah 6:3). Isaiah was afraid because he was unclean. However, one of the seraphim touched his mouth with fire from the altar to forgive his sin.

Then Isaiah heard the voice of Jehovah asking who would go for them. Isaiah answered, **“Lo, send me!”** (Isaiah 6:8). Jehovah told him, **“Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but do not understand, and see ye indeed, but do not perceive. Make the**

**heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn, and be healed”** (Isaiah 6:9-10). When Isaiah asked how long, Jehovah said until the cities were emptied, and the land was utterly waste. Jesus applied those words to the Jews who rejected him. And that unfaithful generation brought upon themselves the utter destruction of their land.

Next the book says that the kings of Syria and Israel went to war against Jerusalem when Ahaz was king. When the people of Judah heard it, their heart trembled greatly. Then Jehovah told Isaiah and his son to go forth to meet Ahaz at a certain place. He was to tell him not to fear those two kings and their evil purpose against him. Jehovah said it would not happen. He also told him that within sixty-five years Ephraim would be broken, and would no longer be a people. Israel was sometimes called Ephraim after they split from Judah, because it was the dominant tribe.

Then Jehovah told Ahaz to ask a sign of him, deep or high, but Ahaz refused. Isaiah then asked if it was a small thing to weary men, that they would weary his God also. He said the Lord would give him a sign anyway: **“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”** (Isaiah 7:14). That virgin was Mary, mother of Jesus. Immanuel means God with us, and Jesus was God with us. Isaiah said before the child would know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the lands of both those kings would be forsaken.

After that Isaiah spoke of those who seek sorcerers and psychics. He asked if a people should not seek for their God. He ridiculed them for seeking the dead on behalf of the living. He told them to seek the law and the testimony, otherwise they would have no future. He said they would see only gloom of anguish, and would be driven away into thick darkness.

Then Isaiah said that although the land of Zebulun and Naphtali were brought into contempt formerly, later it would be made glorious. He called it Galilee of the Gentiles. He said, **“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them the light has shone”** (Isaiah 9:2). The New Testament says that prophecy refers to Jesus (see Matthew 4:15-16).

Isaiah also made another prophecy about him when he said, **“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. And the govern-**

**ment shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this”** (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Isaiah then said that Jehovah caused destruction in Israel because of their sins. Yet they were proud, and said they would rebuild even better. So Jehovah was going to cut off in one day their elders, honorable men, and prophets. He said those men caused the people to err and be destroyed. Jehovah called for the Assyrian, the rod of his anger, to take spoil, and tread them down like mire.

He said the Assyrian does not know that Jehovah has sent him. Instead he boasts about himself. Therefore, Jehovah said he would punish the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria. He said Jehovah would destroy him also. And he told his people who dwelt in Zion (Jerusalem) not to fear the Assyrian. Jehovah said that after a little while he would stir up a scourge against him. He describes how that was done further on in this book.

Next Isaiah prophesied again about Jesus. He said the Spirit of Jehovah would rest upon him. And he said he would defeat the wicked and bring peace. Jesus defeated Satan, and he brought the promise of eternal peace for the righteous. He also said the Gentiles would hope in him. Then Jehovah spoke about recovering the remnant of his people. He said they would live in peace and joy with each other. They would sing and give thanks to Jehovah, and proclaim him among the nations.

Next the book says, **“The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw”** (Isaiah 13:1). Eleven times in this book Isaiah told about the burden of a particular people. And each time the burden was punishment because of their sins. The first was against Babylon. He said, **“Behold, the day of Jehovah comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it”** (Isaiah 13:9). Jehovah said he was going to stir up the Medes against them, and they would not spare even the children. He said Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, would be like Sodom and Gomorrah. He said it would never again to be inhabited, and it never has.

Then Isaiah spoke of the burdens of Philistia, Moab, Damascus,

and Egypt. They were all going to be destroyed. Regarding Moab, he said, **“We have heard of the pride of Moab, that he is very proud, even of his arrogance, and his pride, and his wrath. His boastings are nothing. Therefore Moab shall wail for Moab, everyone shall wail”** (Isaiah 16:6-7).

Regarding Egypt, Jehovah would both smite and heal them, and they would return to him. In that day Egypt, Assyria, and Israel would all join together. For Jehovah had blessed them, saying, **“Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance”** (Isaiah 19:25). Perhaps Isaiah was prophesying about the unity of Christians in all nations.

Then the book says that in the year Assyria conquered Ashdod (a Philistine city), Jehovah told Isaiah to walk naked and barefoot. He walked naked and barefoot for three years. And Jehovah said that was a sign to Egypt and Ethiopia how they were going to be led away captive by Assyria.

Then Isaiah expressed words of praise to Jehovah. He said Jehovah would keep the man who trusts him in perfect peace. Isaiah said to trust in Jehovah forever, for he is an everlasting rock. But he also warned them to hid themselves when Jehovah expresses his indignation. He said, **“For, behold, Jehovah comes forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity”** (Isaiah 26:21). Many times Isaiah told about God punishing people on earth because of their sins. And God still does it.

Then Isaiah said, **“Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim ...”** (Isaiah 28:1). He said Jehovah had a mighty one who would cast them down to the earth like a destroying storm. Then he used words that seem to say they would be condemned for failing to keep the laws of their legalistic system, which Christ abolished for his disciples. Isaiah said, **“Therefore hear the word of Jehovah, ye scoffers, who rule this people that is in Jerusalem”** (Isaiah 28:14). He said they made lies their refuge. Therefore, Jehovah said he was going to lay a precious corner-stone in Zion, and he who believes in him would not be shamed. Peter said that was Jesus (see 1st Peter 2:6).

Next he spoke of Ariel (Jerusalem), the city where David encamped. Jehovah said he was going to bring the city down. He said the people of Ariel are drunken, but not with wine. He said Jehovah had poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep. Jehovah said, **“Inasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth,**

**and honor me with their lips, but have removed their heart far from me, but in vain they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men”** (Isaiah 29:13).

He said woe to those whose works are in the dark, and think they are not seen. He asked them if the potter should be esteemed as clay, or the thing made say that he who formed it had no understanding. Which thing is exactly what evolutionists say created them—mindless chance out of dumb dirt.

After rebuking them for relying on Egypt, he said, **“For it is a rebellious people, lying sons, sons who will not hear the law of Jehovah, who say to the seers, Do not see, and to the prophets, Do not prophesy to us right things. Speak to us smooth things. Prophecy deceits. Get you out of the way. Turn aside out of the path. Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us”** (Isaiah 30:9-11).

Jehovah said because they despised the word, and trusted oppression and perverseness, Jehovah would break them suddenly. He said a thousand of them would flee at the threat of one. And he said, **“Rise up, ye women who are at ease. Hear my voice, ye careless daughters”** (Isaiah 32:9). He told them to be troubled, and beat upon the breasts. He said the palace would be forsaken, and the populous city deserted.

Isaiah said the sinners in Zion were afraid. And he asked who among them could dwell with the devouring fire. He answered and said, **“He who walks righteously, and speaks uprightly. He who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes *away* his hands from taking a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil”** (Isaiah 33:15).

Isaiah said such a man would dwell on high, secure and well-fed. He said his eyes would see the king in his beauty. Alas, this generation of Americans loves to look upon evil. It is entertaining for them instead of being repulsive.

Isaiah told all the nations to listen. He said that Jehovah had indignation against them all, and had delivered them to the slaughter. He also said, **“And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. And all their host shall fade away as the leaf fades from off the vine, and as a fading leaf from the fig tree”** (Isaiah 34:4).

That seems to be a prophecy about the end of the world. For Peter said, **“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the**

**night, during which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements, being intensely hot, will be disintegrated, and the earth and the works in it will be destroyed by fire. Therefore, all these things being disintegrated, what kind ought ye to be in holy actions and pieties, anticipating and hastening the coming of the day of God, by which the heavens, being made fiery hot, will be disintegrated, and the elements dissolve, being intensely hot? But we anticipate a new heavens and a new earth according to his promise, in which righteousness dwells”** (2nd Peter 3:10-13).

Jehovah said the wilderness would be glad, and the desert would rejoice and blossom abundantly. He said they would see the glory of Jehovah. He told the weak hands to be strengthened, and those of a fearful heart not to fear. He said their God was coming with vengeance and recompense to save them. He said then the blind would see, the deaf would hear, the lame would leap, and the mute would sing. And he said there would be a highway called **“The way of holiness”** (Isaiah 35:8). He said the unclean would not pass over it, nor any ravenous beast, but only the redeemed. That seems to be a prophecy of the New Covenant of Christ.

Next the book tells about the siege of Assyria against Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah. Hezekiah sent three officials to ask Isaiah to pray for them. Isaiah told them Jehovah said not to fear the words of the servants of the king of Assyria who had blasphemed him. He said Jehovah would cause him to return to his own land and be killed there. Then Jehovah sent an agent against his army so that 185,000 died. As a result the king of Assyria returned to his country, and he was killed by his own two sons.

After that Hezekiah became sick, and Isaiah told him that Jehovah said he was going to die. However, after Isaiah left Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed. He asked Jehovah to spare his life, because he had been faithful to him. The book says he wept greatly. Then Jehovah told Isaiah to go back to Hezekiah, and tell him he had heard his prayer, and had seen his tears. He was going to add fifteen years to his life.

At about the same time the king of Babylon sent men with letters and a present to Hezekiah, because he heard about his sickness and recovery. Hezekiah was glad to receive them. And he showed them all the treasures of his dominion. Then Isaiah came and asked about the men. When Hezekiah said he showed them everything, Isaiah told him what Jehovah said about that. Jehovah said the days were

coming when everything would be carried to Babylon. Even his sons would be taken and made eunuchs in the palace of their king. Then Hezekiah said, **“The word of Jehovah which thou have spoken is good. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days”** (Isaiah 39:8).

Next Isaiah prophesied about John the immerser. He said, **“The voice of a man crying out in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low. And the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places smooth”** (Isaiah 40:3-4).

Isaiah also told of a prophecy from God about Jesus: **“Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench, but he will bring forth justice in truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged till he has set justice in the earth. And in his name Gentiles will hope”** (Isaiah 42:1-4). Those words are quoted in Matthew 12:18-21.

Then after saying that he created the heavens and the earth, Jehovah said more about Jesus: **“I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and those who sit in darkness out of the prison-house”** (Isaiah 42:6-7).

After that Jehovah described step by step the work of the carpenter. He said the carpenter takes a tree. He burns some of it to get warm, and some of it to bake bread or roast flesh. Then he said, **“And the residue of it he makes a god, even his graven image. He falls down to it and worships, and prays to it, and says, Deliver me, for thou are my god”** (Isaiah 44:17). Christians have learned how ridiculous idol worship is, and the theory of evolution is just as ridiculous. Jehovah said, **“He feeds on ashes. A deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?”** (Isaiah 44:20). That also describes evolutionists. Jehovah told Israel to remember those things.

Jehovah said he made Israel, his servant, and he would not forget him (referring to the nation). He said he had blotted out his transgressions. And he said, **“Return to me, for I have redeemed thee”** (Isaiah 44:22). Then he told the heavens to sing, and the earth to shout. He said Cyrus would command Jerusalem be rebuilt, and the foundation of the temple be laid. King Cyrus of Persia had not even been born when that prophecy was made.

God said he was Jehovah, and there was none else. He said, **“I form the light, and create darkness. I make peace, and create evil [meaning harmful things, not sin]. I am Jehovah who does all these things”** (Isaiah 45:7). And he called for the heavens and the earth to bring forth righteousness. Then he said, **“Woe to him who strives with his maker, a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him that fashions it, What are thou making? or thy work, He has no hands?”** (Isaiah 45:9). Which is what those who challenge God do.

Jehovah told the house of Israel that it was he who bore them from birth, and would carry them even to old age. Jehovah told them to remember the former things of old, that he alone was God. He said, **“My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure ... . Yea, I have spoken. I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed. I will also do it”** (Isaiah 46:10-11). He said his righteousness would not be far off, nor his salvation tarry. He said he would place salvation in Zion for Israel his glory.

Jehovah said that he was the God of Israel, who teaches them and leads them by the way they should go. Jehovah said, **“Oh that thou had hearkened to my commandments! Then thy peace would have been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea”** (Isaiah 48:18). He told them to go forth from Babylon (where they had been taken captive), for he had redeemed his servant Jacob. And he told how he gave them water in the desert.

Isaiah said Jehovah had given him an educated tongue to sustain with words him who is weary. He told all who fear Jehovah to trust in his name. He said all who kindle fire (of unrighteousness) would walk in their own flame.

Then Jehovah said for those who follow after righteousness to hearken to him. He said, **“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath. For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it shall die in like manner. But my salvation**

**shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished”** (Isaiah 51:6).

Then Isaiah said, **“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, Thy God reigns!”** (Isaiah 52:7). That was applied by Paul to the message of Christ (see Romans 10:15).

This next part of Isaiah is a lengthy prophecy of the Christ. It describes remarkable details about him. And those words were written centuries before he was born. Jehovah spoke of him as his servant, and he said he would be exalted. He asked who would believe the report about him. He said he grew up as a tender plant.

Then he told how he was rejected: **“And when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And as him from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed him not”** (Isaiah 53:2-3).

He said he had borne our griefs and sorrows, and he was wounded for our transgressions. He said we were healed by his stripes. For we had all gone astray like sheep. He also told about his crucifixion: **“He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that is mute before its shearers, so he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his justice was taken away. And as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due*? And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death. Although he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth”** (Isaiah 53:7-9)

The “grave of the wicked” was his execution with criminals. And he was buried in the sepulcher of a rich man. Isaiah said it pleased Jehovah to bruise him (because it brought salvation to us). He also said the pleasure of Jehovah would prosper in his hand. He said, **“Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors. Yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors”** (Isaiah 53:12).

By his obedient suffering Jesus became our Redeemer and our Savior. Then Isaiah quoted some words of God that describe how

great God is: **“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”** (Isaiah 55:8-9).

To give you some idea about how high that is, consider this. If a spaceship could travel at the speed of light, it would only take about one second to reach the moon. However, it would take the ship about fourteen billion years to go to the edge of the current visible universe. And astronomers say the heavens probably extend farther out than that. Moreover, they say the universe is continuing to expand. Yet Isaiah said Jehovah’s thoughts and ways are that much higher than ours. And remember, Jehovah said his loving kindness toward those who fear him was also that high (see Psalm 103:11:12). Should we not also love him and obey him?

Jehovah said that as the rain comes down and waters the earth, so would his word go forth. He said it would not return void. He said it would prosper in the thing to which he sent it. And truly the Bible has exalted the world, far more than men appreciate. Then Isaiah said, **“Thus says Jehovah, Keep ye justice, and do righteousness. For my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed”** (Isaiah 56:1). He said the man who did those things would be blessed.

Next Isaiah (or perhaps Jehovah directly) warned of catastrophe. He told the beasts of the field to come to devour. He criticized the people for being ignorant and greedy. He said, **“Come ye, they say, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink. And tomorrow shall be as this day, great beyond measure”** (Isaiah 56:12).

Isaiah said the righteous man perished and merciful men were taken away, and no man noticed. He said they were taken away from the evil to come. I fear when the last righteous man is taken from San Francisco. Will it not also be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah, because its citizens are becoming like they were? And Las Vegas is known as sin city.

Jehovah said that he who takes refuge in him would possess the land. He said, **“For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite”** (Isaiah 57:15).

He said he would not contend forever, nor would he always be angry. He said he would heal him (Israel), and restore comforts to him and his mourners. He said the wicked are like the troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt. He said, **“There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked”** (Isaiah 57:21).

Then he said to shout to his people about their transgression. He criticized them for their hypocrisy. They wondered why he paid no attention when they fasted. Jehovah said it was because they were not righteous. He said they fasted for fighting and wickedness. He asked them if they thought going around in sackcloth and ashes was what Jehovah wanted. He said no, it was such things as letting the oppressed go free, sharing their bread with a hungry man, sheltering the poor. He said then Jehovah would answer when they cry out to him, and he would bless them. He said, **“Behold, Jehovah’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you so that he will not hear”** (Isaiah 59:1-2).

He said their hands were defiled with blood, their fingers with iniquity, their lips spoke lies, and their tongue muttered wickedness. He said, **“No man sues in righteousness, and no man pleads in truth”** (Isaiah 59:4). That also describes many in this generation of Americans. And with more words he described how wicked they were.

Isaiah said that justice was far from them. He said they looked for brightness, but walked in darkness. He said, **“And justice is turned away backward, and righteousness stands afar off. For truth has fallen in the street, and uprightness cannot enter. Yea, truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. And Jehovah saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice”** (Isaiah 59:14-15). Jehovah said he would repay his adversaries according to their deeds.

Then he described the glory of the new Jerusalem in heaven (see also Revelation 21). He said there would be no violence there. He also said there would be no sun or moon, because Jehovah would be their everlasting light. After that the book says, **“The Spirit of the lord Jehovah is upon me, because Jehovah has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and the opening of bonds to those who are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah”** (Isaiah

61:1-2). Jesus read that passage in a synagogue in Nazareth, and said it spoke of him (see Luke 4:18-19).

Isaiah said he would make mention of the loving kindness of Jehovah, and all the great goodness he had given to the house of Israel. Jehovah said they were his people. And he said, **“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the agent of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them. And he bore them, and carried them all the days of old.”** Then he said, **“But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit. Therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them”** (Isaiah 63:9-10).

Then Isaiah asked Jehovah to return the tribes of his inheritance. He said their adversaries had trodden down his sanctuary. Isaiah longed for Jehovah to come down with power, and make his name known to his adversaries. He said, **“For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he has prepared for him who waits for him”** (Isaiah 64:4). Those are beautiful words of hope for all who trust him. Paul mentioned them to the Corinthian church (see 1st Corinthians 2:9). And he added to them, saying we cannot even imagine how wonderful heaven will be for us.

Then Isaiah said Jehovah was angry, for they had all sinned and become unclean. He said even their righteous acts were like a polluted garment. Isaiah said, **“But now, O Jehovah, thou are our Father. We are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thy hand. Be not angry very severely, O Jehovah, nor remember iniquity forever. Behold, look, we beseech thee, we are all thy people”** (Isaiah 64:8-9). He said their holy cities had become a wilderness. And their holy and beautiful house (the temple) was burned with fire.

Yet Jehovah also said he was going to create a new heavens and a new earth. He said he would create a Jerusalem that would have no weeping or crying. He said they would not fail in whatever they did. And there would not be any predators or destroyers, for they would all live in peace. You can read more about that in Revelation 21.

Jehovah said heaven was his throne, and the earth was his footstool. He said, **“For all these things my hand has made, and all these things came to be, says Jehovah. But to this man I will look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who**

**trembles at my word**” (Isaiah 66:2). After that Jehovah described how abominable their worship was to him because they were so rebellious.

Then Jehovah said, **“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain”** (Isaiah 66:23). He said that all flesh would come to worship before him. He said they would see the dead bodies of the men who sinned against him, **“For their worm shall not die, nor shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh”** (Isaiah 66:24).

### A Description of **Jeremiah**

This is a book of prophecy. However, here is a lot of history in it. And it is important to know that its history sometimes goes back and forth in time. That is also true of some other books of the Bible, but not as much this one. So try to not let that confuse you.

The book says Jeremiah was of the priests who lived in Benjamin near Jerusalem. During his time the men of Judah and Jerusalem had become very sinful. Israel had been destroyed a century before because of their sins, and its people were carried away captive. Jeremiah began to prophesy a few years before Judah was conquered and its people taken into captivity. Before its destruction, however, Jehovah sent men like Jeremiah to warn the people to repent. The book tells how Jehovah warned them, many times, that destruction was coming upon them if they did not repent. Yet they were obstinate and stubborn, and would not listen.

The word of Jehovah first came to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah king of Judah. Jehovah told Jeremiah he had appointed him to be a prophet, even before he was born. Like Moses, however, Jeremiah did not think he was qualified. Jeremiah thought he was too young. Jehovah told him not to be afraid of them, because he would protect him. Jehovah said they would fight against him, but they would not succeed.

Jehovah told Jeremiah to go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, **“Thus says Jehovah ...”** (Jeremiah 2:2). Jehovah first reminded the people how good he was to them at the beginning of their nation. Then Jehovah asked them what he had done wrong to cause their fathers to go far from him. Jehovah said they had defiled the land. Israel was God’s nation, his heritage. He told them they

had made his heritage an abomination. He said the priests did not ask about him, the rulers transgressed against him, and the prophets prophesied by Baal. Jehovah said therefore he was going to be against them because they had forsaken him. Jehovah said their own wickedness would correct them.

He said the house of Israel was shamed like a man caught stealing. For they and their leaders called a block of wood their father. And they said a stone brought them forth. The wood and stone refer to their idols. Modern evolutionists are no less shameful. They say their forefathers were monkeys, and primordial slime created them. How dumb can you get? Jehovah told his people they had turned their back to him. He said in time of trouble they would ask for his help, but he would tell them to ask their idols instead.

Jehovah asked them why they were against him. He said they had all transgressed against him. He asked if he had been a wilderness or a land of thick darkness to Israel. If not, he wanted to know why they abandon him. Jehovah asked if a bride could forget her clothing, yet his people had forgotten him for a long time. He told them of their guilt, yet they claimed they were innocent. Jehovah said therefore he was going to judge Judah. They had polluted the land with their wickedness.

Josiah had been a righteous king. He promoted a return to Jehovah and his law. And he put away all the idols and abominations from Judah. Yet the heart of the population did not return to God. Jehovah said they only pretended to return to him. Jehovah asked Jeremiah in the days of Josiah if he had seen what backsliding Israel had been doing, acting like a whore with their idols everywhere. He said he divorced her (Israel) because of it, **“yet treacherous Judah her sister feared not”** (Jeremiah 3:8).

Jehovah said she also acted like a whore. Jeremiah said Jehovah told him that backsliding Israel had shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. Jehovah told him to say, **“Return, O backsliding sons, says Jehovah, for I have rule over you. And I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding”** (Jeremiah 3:14-15).

Jehovah told the people he was bringing evil from the north, and a great destruction. It would make their land desolate, and the cities waste, without inhabitant. Jehovah knew the people were not going

to repent, and thus escape destruction. However, Jeremiah must have thought they would, for he said, **“Ah, lord Jehovah! Surely thou have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace, whereas the sword reaches to the life”** (Jeremiah 4:10). Yet Jehovah again warned how the people and Jerusalem were going to be destroyed. Jehovah did not want to destroy his people, but they kept refusing to repent. He had to stop them because sin is like an infectious disease.

Nevertheless, Jehovah kept warning them. He said, **“O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou may be saved. How long shall thine evil thoughts lodge within thee?”** (Jeremiah 4:14). He said evil was coming against Jerusalem and the cities of Judah because she was rebellious against him. Jehovah said his people were wise to do evil, but had no knowledge to do good.

Jehovah told Jeremiah, **“Declare ye this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying, Hear now this, O foolish people ...”** (Jeremiah 5:20-21). Jehovah asked if they would not fear him, and tremble at his presence. Jehovah said he controlled the waves of the sea, but the people were rebels. Jehovah said their sins had withheld good from them. He said they overflowed in deeds of wickedness, and ignored the needy. Jehovah said, **“Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”** (Jeremiah 5:29).

Jehovah again warned of evil and great destruction coming from the north. He said to prepare war against Jerusalem, for they had no delight in the word of Jehovah. Therefore he was full of wrath, and was weary of holding in. He said, **“For from the least of them even to the greatest of them everyone is given to covetousness. And from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely”** (Jeremiah 6:13). And they were not ashamed when they committed abomination. Therefore Jehovah said they would be cast down when he visited them.

Jehovah told Jeremiah to stand in the gate of Jehovah’s house, and proclaim the word of Jehovah to them. Jehovah said if they amended their ways, and did righteously, then he would preserve them in the land. Jehovah asked if they would trust in lying words, do evil, and walk after other gods, then come to his house, and say they were saved? He said, **“Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, says Jehovah”** (Jeremiah 7:11). Jehovah said, because they would not listen to him he was going to destroy the temple and Jerusalem. And he was going to do to them as he had to

their brothers (the northern tribes). Jehovah told Jeremiah not to pray for the people, for he would not hear him.

Jehovah said the birds know their appointed times, **“but my people know not the law of Jehovah”** (Jeremiah 8:7). He said, **“The wise men are put to shame. They are dismayed and taken. Lo, they have rejected the word of Jehovah, and what manner of wisdom is in them?”** (Jeremiah 8:9). And again he said that everyone was given to greed, dealt falsely, and was not at all ashamed. And again he said they would be cast down. Jehovah said he was going to send serpents to bite them.

Jehovah said they went from evil to evil, and did not know him. He said, **“Take ye heed each one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother, for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will go about with slanders. And they will deceive each one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth”** (Jeremiah 9:4-5). Jehovah said he would make all the cities of Judah a desolation, and he would scatter the people among the nations. Jehovah said the dead bodies of men would fall as dung upon the open field.

Then Jehovah said, **“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he has understanding, and knows me, that I am Jehovah who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth. For in these things I delight, says Jehovah”** (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Dear reader, pay careful attention to that scripture. It is filled with wisdom for him who has eyes to see. If you want to please God, then pursue the things he desires: loving kindness, justice, and righteousness.

Jeremiah said Jehovah had pronounced evil against the houses of Israel and Judah because they had done evil. Then Jeremiah asked Jehovah why the wicked prosper. He asked Jehovah to pull them out like sheep for the slaughter. He asked how long the land would mourn because of those wicked men. But Jehovah seems to have said it was much worse than Jeremiah thought. He told Jeremiah that even his brothers, and the house of his father, dealt treacherously with him (Jeremiah). Jehovah said, **“Believe them not, though they speak fair words to thee”** (Jeremiah 12:6).

Jehovah said he had forsaken his house (the temple), and cast off

his heritage. He said, **“I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies”** (Jeremiah 12:7). He said, **“She has uttered her voice against me. Therefore I have hated her”** (Jeremiah 12:8). Notice he called the people of his heritage the dearly beloved of his soul. Yet he also said he hated her, because she was against him. Then he spoke again of the devastation of the land. He said the sword of Jehovah devoured from the one end of the land to the other. But he also said again that he would return his people to their land.

Because Jeremiah suffered so much persecution, he said, **“Woe is me, my mother, that thou have bore me, a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have not lent, nor have men lent to me, yet every one of them curses me”** (Jeremiah 15:10). They cursed him because he testified against them, as Jehovah had commanded him. That is why Jesus was persecuted, for he told his brothers, **“The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it, that its works are evil”** (John 7:7). Jehovah told Jeremiah he would strengthen him and do him good. And he again told of the destruction of the land, and the scattering of the people.

Then Jeremiah spoke more about his persecution. He said, **“O Jehovah, thou know. Remember me, and visit me, and avenge me of my persecutors. Take me not away in thy longsuffering. Know that for thy sake I have suffered reproach. Thy words were found, and I ate them. And thy words were to me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart. For I am called by thy name, O Jehovah, God of hosts. I did not sit in the assembly of those who make merry, nor did I rejoice. I sat alone because of thy hand, for thou have filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuses to be healed? Will thou indeed be to me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?”** (Jeremiah 15:15-18).

In the bitterness of his persecution, Jeremiah apparently began to doubt God’s promise of protection. But Jehovah encouraged him more. He said the people would fight against him, but would not succeed. For he was with him to save him, and would deliver him from the hand of the wicked and the terrible.

However, Jehovah also told him not to take a wife, nor have sons or daughters in that place. He said they would all die grievous deaths. They would be neither lamented nor buried, but would be food for the birds and the beasts. And Jehovah said to Jeremiah that

when the people hear all those words, and asked why Jehovah had pronounced all that great evil against them, he was to tell them it was because their fathers forsook Jehovah and did not keep his law. And they had done more evil than their fathers, so he was going to scatter them. However, Jehovah said he would send and bring them back after their captivity. But first he would recompense their iniquity and their sin double, because they polluted his land with their abominations.

Next Jehovah spoke a profound truth about human nature, one that few men realize, but that every man should learn: **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt. Who can know it? I, Jehovah, search the mind. I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings”** (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

How common it is for a man’s mind to deceive him. Therefore be suspicious about many of your thoughts. Choose carefully among them, accepting the good and rejecting the bad. If you are unsure about any, then use caution and verify their worth. And do not believe any “vision” you may see. Choose your thoughts like gathering food in the wilderness, for every man’s mind is a jungle full of corrupt things. Did not Jehovah say **“it is exceedingly corrupt”**? Do as Solomon said: **“Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life”** (Proverbs 4:23).

Again the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah. Jehovah told him to go to the potter’s house. When Jeremiah went he saw how the potter dealt with the clay of a vessel that became damaged. The potter would simply make another vessel with the clay as he saw fit. Then the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying, **“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? says Jehovah. Behold, as the clay in the potter’s hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel”** (Jeremiah 18:6).

Jehovah again told Jeremiah to warn the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Yet they did not believe Jehovah’s words, and they plotted against Jeremiah for speaking them. Therefore, Jeremiah asked Jehovah for vengeance. He reminded Jehovah how he had spoken good to him for those men. But because of their evil against him Jeremiah then asked that evil come to them.

He asked that their sons be delivered to the famine, that the men be slain by the sword, and their wives be childless and widows. He said, **“Jehovah, thou know all their counsel against me to kill**

**me. Do not forgive their iniquity, nor blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee. Deal thou with them in the time of thine anger”** (Jeremiah 18:23). Let no man condemn Jeremiah for wanting vengeance. Remember Revelation 6:10, which tells how the martyrs in heaven cried out for vengeance.

Next Jeremiah tells of his struggle as a prophet. He said, **“I have become a laughing-stock all the day; everyone mocks me. For as often as I speak, I cry out. I cry, Violence and destruction! Because the word of Jehovah is made a reproach to me, and a derision, all the day. And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot”** (Jeremiah 20:7-8). Jeremiah went on to express his trust in Jehovah, and to praise him.

However, after that the book says that Jeremiah cursed the day he was born. He even cursed the man who told his father about his birth for not killing him instead. He said, **“Why did I come forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?”** (Jeremiah 20:18).

Job also cursed the day he was born, but he did not curse any man associated with it. Of course, we cannot compare those two men and their different circumstances. However, I can think of no justification for Jeremiah cursing the man who brought news of his birth. I can only think of a possible explanation. For Solomon said, **“Surely oppression makes the wise man foolish”** (Ecclesiastes 7:7). And the above curse by Jeremiah reveals how much he suffered from oppression. Indeed, except for a very few times he was rejected and persecuted by the entire population, including his own family, for most if not all of his adult life. It is also quite possible that Jeremiah later regretted having said those words. Let no man criticize Jeremiah harshly who has not suffered as much as he had.

Next is a description of events that occurred near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. King Zedekiah (the last king before the destruction) sent men to Jeremiah asking him to pray to Jehovah that they might be delivered from Nebuchadrezzar (also spelled Nebuchadnezzar) king of Babylon. Jehovah’s reply was that he himself would fight against the city, even in anger, wrath, and great indignation. The inhabitants would die and the city would be burned with fire. He said that whoever went out and surrendered to the Chaldeans who besieged them would save his life.

Then Jeremiah said his heart within him was broken, because of Jehovah and his holy words. He said the land was full of adulterers. He said both prophet and priest were profane. Jehovah even said he had found their wickedness in his house. Therefore he again said that he was going to bring evil upon them. Jehovah said the prophets of Jerusalem committed adultery and walked in lies. He said, **“And they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that none returns from his wickedness”** (Jeremiah 23:14).

Jehovah said his wrath would be a whirling tempest that would burst upon the head of the wicked. And he rebuked the people for saying, **“What is the burden of Jehovah?”** (Jeremiah 23:33). Apparently they thought Jehovah was a burden to them. He told them to stop saying it. Otherwise he would bring everlasting reproach upon them, and a perpetual shame.

Jeremiah told about receiving the word of Jehovah in the beginning of the reign of king Jehoiakim. Jehovah told him to stand in the court of Jehovah’s house, and speak his words to all the cities which came to worship there. Jehovah said that perhaps each man would turn from his evil way, and he would not do the evil he planned against them.

However, after Jeremiah had finished speaking all that Jehovah commanded him, the book says, **“... the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shall surely die”** (Jeremiah 26:8). They did not like his prophecy that the temple and the city would be destroyed. So they brought Jeremiah to the rulers of Judah, and made their accusations.

Jeremiah said that Jehovah sent him, and they should repent. Then the rulers and all the people told the priests and the prophets that Jeremiah was not worthy of death, for he had spoken to them in the name of Jehovah. And certain of the rulers rose up, and argued against harming Jeremiah. That was one of the few times the rulers and the people defended him.

After that the book tells the words of the letter that Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to those who were carried away captive to Babylon. Some had already been taken. Jeremiah told them that Jehovah wanted them to settle there and live for the long term. He said not to listen to the prophets among them. It would be seventy years before Jehovah would bring them back to Jerusalem. And Jehovah said he was sending the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, against the king and all the people who remained in Jerusalem. However, Jeho-

vah also said he would later have compassion on his dwelling-places. And out of them would proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who make merry.

After that the book says, **“Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant, and I disregarded them, says Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Jehovah: I will give my laws in their inward parts, and I will write them in their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says Jehovah. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more”** (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Testament says those words refer to the disciples of Christ (see Hebrews 8:8-12).

Next the book says the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah. The king of Babylon’s army was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah was in the palace prison. Zedekiah had placed him there, wanting to know why he prophesied that Jehovah said the city would be defeated and Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon.

Then the book says the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah while he was still shut up in the court of the guard. Jehovah described some of the horrors of the siege caused by his anger over the wickedness of the city. But he also said he would eventually bring back the captivity of Judah and Israel, and rebuild them as at the first. And he said he would pardon all their iniquities against him. Jehovah went on to contrast the total destruction of the cities of Judah that Jeremiah saw, with their future development and prosperity

Next the book says, **“The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak to them, and bring them into the house of Jehovah, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink”** (Jeremiah 35:1-2). When Jeremiah gave them wine the Rechabites refused to drink. They said Jonadab their father commanded them to never drink wine.

Then Jehovah told Jeremiah to go to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He was to tell them about the sons of Jonadab, who were obeying their father. And he rebuked the Jews for not obeying him as the sons of Jonadab had obeyed their father. Therefore, he said he was going to bring all the evil he had pronounced against them, but he would spare the sons of Jonadab.

After that the book says the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah. Jehovah said, **“Take thee a roll of a book, and write in it all the words that I have spoken to thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to thee, from the days of Josiah, even to this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do to them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin”** (Jeremiah 36:2-3).

Then Jeremiah called for Baruch, who wrote all the words of Jehovah that Jeremiah told him. Afterward Jeremiah told Baruch he was shut up and unable to go into the house of Jehovah. So he commanded Baruch to read the roll in the ears of the people there. He said they might turn each one from his evil way. For great was the anger of Jehovah that he had pronounced against the people. So Baruch did.

After that the book says in the fifth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah all the people proclaimed a fast before Jehovah. Then Baruch read Jeremiah’s words to all the people in a chamber in the house of Jehovah. And when Micaiah heard all the words of Jehovah from the book he went into the scribe’s chamber in the king’s house. All the rulers were sitting there, and he told them the words. Therefore they sent a man named Jehudi to bring the roll to them. So Baruch brought it to the rulers, and he read it to them. The book says when they heard it **“they turned in fear one toward another, and said to Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words”** (Jeremiah 36:16).

The rulers told Baruch that he and Jeremiah should hide. Jeremiah must have been released sometime before that. Then they went to the king, and told him the words of the roll. So the king sent for the roll, and Jehudi read it to him and all the rulers with him. However, after three or four leaves had been read, the king cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire in the brazier. The Bible says, **“And they were not afraid, nor tore their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants who heard all these**

**words”** (Jeremiah 36:24). Although three of the rulers urged him not to burn the roll, he would not listen. Instead he commanded to arrest Baruch and Jeremiah, but Jehovah hid them.

Then the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah. He told him to take another roll, and write the same words in it. Jeremiah was also to tell Johoiakim that Jehovah said he would have no heir for the throne, and his dead body would be cast out in the weather. Jehovah also told again about the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. Therefore, Jeremiah gave Baruch another roll, and he wrote the previous words in it. The Bible also says, “... **and there were added besides to them many like words”** (Jeremiah 36:32).

Next the book says, “**And Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned as king, instead of Coniah [Jehoiachin] the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah”** (Jeremiah 37:1). But he also did not listen to the words of Jehovah from the prophet Jeremiah. Nevertheless, he sent men to Jeremiah, telling him to pray to Jehovah for them. Jeremiah was able to go about freely because they had not yet put him in prison. The Chaldeans had been besieging Jerusalem, but they withdrew when they heard that Pharaoh’s army came forth out of Egypt.

Then the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, telling him what to reply to the king of Judah. Jehovah told the king not to think the Chaldeans were gone, for they were going to return against the city. And even if Zedekiah smote the whole army, the wounded who remained would rise up and burn it with fire.

Some of the rulers heard that Jeremiah told the people Jehovah said only those who surrendered to the Chaldeans would survive. So they said to the king, “**Let this man, we pray thee, be put to death, inasmuch as he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words to them. For this man seeks not the welfare of this people, but the hurt”** (Jeremiah 38:4). Zedekiah said he could not oppose them. Therefore, they let Jeremiah down with cords in a dungeon, and he sank in the mire.

When Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch in the king’s house, heard they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon, he went to the king. He told him those men had done evil by so doing, for Jeremiah was going to die there. So the king commanded him to take thirty men, and take Jeremiah out. Then Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

Afterward Zedekiah the king sent for Jeremiah, and said to him, **“I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me”** (Jeremiah 38:14). And Jeremiah replied, **“If I declare it to thee, will thou not surely put me to death? And if I give thee counsel, thou will not hearken to me”** (Jeremiah 38:15). But Zedekiah swore secretly to him that he would neither put him to death, nor deliver him to the men who sought his life.

Therefore, Jeremiah told him Jehovah said that only if he surrendered to the king of Babylon’s rulers would he live, and the city not be burned. Jeremiah said that he, his family, and the city would not escape disaster by the Chaldeans if he refused. Then Zedekiah told Jeremiah to tell no man about their words. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day Jerusalem was taken.

The army of Nebuchadrezzar besieged Jerusalem in the ninth year of king Zedekiah. They broke into the city in the eleventh year, and all the princes of the king of Babylon sat in the middle gate. When Zedekiah and all the men of war saw them, they fled out of the city by night. But the Chaldean army overtook them in the plains of Jericho.

Then they brought Zedekiah to the king of Babylon in Riblah, which may have been in Syria. He killed his sons in his sight, put out his eyes, and sent him bound to Babylon. He also killed all the nobles of Judah, burned all the houses of Jerusalem, and broke down its walls. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away the residue of the people to Babylon, but he left of the poor people, and gave them vineyards and fields.

Then the book says, **“Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm, but do to him even as he shall say to thee”** (Jeremiah 39:11-12). So they took Jeremiah out of the court of the guard, and he went among the people. The book also says that while Jeremiah was shut up, the word of Jehovah had come to him about Ebed-melech the Ethiopian. Jehovah said he would save his life because he trusted in him.

The next part of the book tells what happened to Jeremiah and the remnant of the Jews after Jerusalem had been conquered. Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from being bound in chains with the other captives of Jerusalem and Judah. The captain of the guard said to Jeremiah, **“Jehovah thy God pronounced**

**this evil upon this place, and Jehovah has brought it, and done according as he spoke. Because ye have sinned against Jehovah, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing has come upon you”** (Jeremiah 40:2-3). Then he told Jeremiah he was free to go wherever he desired. So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah, who had been appointed governor by the Chaldeans. And he dwelt with him among the people who remained.

The captains of the (Jewish) forces in the fields (among whom were Ishmael and Johanan) heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor over those who remained. So they and their men came to him. And he swore to them that it would be well with them if they served the Chaldeans. Also all the Jews who were in the neighboring countries heard about Gedaliah, and they returned to the land of Judah and to him.

Then Johanan and all the captains warned Gedaliah that the king of the sons of Ammon had sent Ishmael to assassinate him. But Gedaliah did not believe them. Nevertheless, Ishmael did come later with some other men and killed him. They also killed all the Jews who were with him, as well as the Chaldean soldiers who were there.

Then Ishmael carried away captive the residue of the people who were in Mizpah, and went to go to the sons of Ammon. Johanan and all the captains of the forces who were with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael had done. So they went to fight him. When the captives saw Johanan coming they were glad, and turned around and came back. However Ishmael escaped with eight men, and went to the sons of Ammon.

Johanan, and all the captains of the forces who were with him, took the remnant from Mizpah, and dwelt near Bethlehem to go to Egypt. They feared the Chaldeans because of what Ishmael had done to Gedaliah the governor. Then Johanan and all the others came to Jeremiah, and asked him to pray to Jehovah for guidance. Jeremiah said he would, and he would tell them whatever Jehovah said. Therefore, they said to Jeremiah, **“Jehovah be a true and faithful witness amongst us, if we do not according to all the word with which Jehovah thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of Jehovah our God, to whom we send thee, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of Jehovah our God”** (Jeremiah 42:5-6).

After ten days the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, and he called Johanan and all the others. Jehovah said to them if they remained in the land, he would build them up. He told them not to fear the king of Babylon. Jehovah said he would grant them mercy, and cause them to return to their own land. However, if they disobeyed him, and entered into Egypt, then the sword and the famine would follow them, and they would die there. And with many other words Jehovah warned them not to go to Egypt.

However, the book says that a man named Azariah, with Johanan and “all the proud men,” accused Jeremiah of speaking falsely. They said Jehovah had not sent him. Therefore, Johanan and all the captains of the forces took all the remnant of Judah, including Jeremiah, and came to Tahpanhes, a city of Egypt.

Then the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah. Jehovah told him to take great stones, and hide them in mortar in the brickwork at the entry of Pharaoh’s house there. He was to tell the men of Judah that was where Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon would set his throne. Jehovah said he was going to smite the land of Egypt, to bring death and destruction.

After that the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah about all the Jews in Egypt. Jehovah said they had seen all the evil he brought upon Jerusalem and the cities of Judah because of their wickedness. He said he sent his servants the prophets to warn them, but they would not listen. Therefore his wrath was poured forth. And he asked them why they were committing a great evil against their own souls by burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt to provoke him to wrath. He said therefore he was going to consume the remnant of Judah in Egypt by the sword and the famine.

The book says, “**Then all the men who knew that their wives burned incense to other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great assembly, even all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah**” (Jeremiah 44:15). They said they would not listen to the word he had spoken to them in the name of Jehovah. They said they were going to continue to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and pour out drink offerings to her, as they had in the cities of Judah. They said that then they were prosperous and well. But since they quit worshiping her they had suffered hardship. And the wives said they had their husband’s support.

Jeremiah told them their land had become a desolation because

they did evil and committed abominations. He said evil had happened to them because they had burned incense and disobeyed the voice of Jehovah. Then Jehovah said that because they and their wives vowed to burn incense to the queen of heaven, all the men of Judah in the land of Egypt were going to be consumed by sword and by famine. Only a few would escape into the land of Judah.

After that the book says, **“The word of Jehovah which came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations”** (Jeremiah 46:1). First he said Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon was going to destroy the army of Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt, and smite their land. Then Jehovah told Israel not to be dismayed. He said he would return in peace, for he was with him (Israel). He said he would make a full end of all the nations where he had driven him, but he would not make a full end of him.

After that the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah against several nations, including Babylon. He was going to destroy them also because of their evil. Then Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon. And he told Seraiah, the chief chamberlain, that when he came to Babylon he was to read all those words. Then he was to bind a stone to the book, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates. And he was to say, **“Thus Babylon shall sink, and shall not rise again because of the evil that I will bring upon her, and they shall be weary”** (Jeremiah 51:64).

After that the book says the words of Jeremiah ended. The remainder of the book is very similar to the last part of Second Kings. It describes the siege and conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar. Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard came into Jerusalem with his army. He burned the temple and all the houses of Jerusalem, and broke down the walls of the city.

Then he carried away captive the residue of the people. But he left of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen. The Chaldeans also carried away everything of gold, silver, and brass that was in the house of Jehovah. The captain of the guard also took Seraiah the chief priest and seventy-two other men found in the city. He brought them to the king of Babylon, and he put them to death.

## A Description of Lamentations

This book is a bitter lamentation over the destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah probably wrote it. The author often refers to the city as a grieving woman. It begins with these words: **“How the city sits solitary, that was full of people! She has become as a widow, who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become tributary! She weeps bitterly in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. Among all her loved ones she has none to comfort her. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies”** (Lamentations 1:1-2).

The book describes many of her sorrows, including things such as captivity, forced labor, persecution and affliction. None helped her, and the adversaries mocked at her desolations. The book says Jerusalem had sinned grievously. That was why she became as an unclean thing. It says the enemy had seized all her pleasant things, and all her people sighed and went hungry.

Next the city herself seemed to speak. She said to look and see if there was any sorrow like her sorrow. She said Jehovah had afflicted her in the day of his fierce anger, and had sent fire into her bones. She said her eye ran down with water, and there was none to comfort her. But she also confessed, saying that Jehovah was righteous, because she had rebelled against his commandment. She said all her enemies were glad of her affliction. Therefore, she said to Jehovah, **“Let all their wickedness come before thee, and do to them, as thou have done to me for all my transgressions. For my sighs are many, and my heart is faint”** (Lamentations 1:22).

The author said he was a man who had seen affliction by the rod of Jehovah’s wrath. And he spoke of many afflictions that Jehovah had brought upon him. He said Jehovah caused him to walk in darkness, broke his bones, walled him around, shut out his prayer, made his paths crooked, made him desolate, and other such things. He said, **“I have become a derision to all my people, and their song all the day”** (Lamentations 3:14), which was certainly true of Jeremiah. Like Job, he asked that his affliction and misery be remembered. And so it is by all who read of him in the Holy Bible, the eternal book.

Then he spoke some beautiful words of encouragement. Among them he said, **“Jehovah is my portion, says my soul, therefore I**

**will hope in him. Jehovah is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. ... It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. ... Let him give his cheek to him who smites him. ... For Jehovah will not cast off forever. ... For he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the sons of men”** (Lamentations 3:24-36).

Jehovah does not want to afflict us, but there are times when he must. Then the author asked if anything can happen when Jehovah does not command it. Nothing can happen without Jehovah’s permission, although he certainly does not approve all that happens. He allows sin and evil in this world for many reasons, all of which work for good to those who love him (see Romans 8:28). The author asked why a living man complains about the punishment of his sins. He said we should search and test our ways, and turn again to Jehovah.

And he again described many of the horrors of the destruction. For example, the stones of the beautiful temple were scattered; the women became cruel, boiling their own children; the skin of the ranking men, formerly whiter than milk, became withered and black. He said Jehovah had accomplished his wrath, and devoured the foundations of Zion. He said it was because of the sins of her prophets and priests. They had shed the blood of the just in the midst of her. Now they wandered among the nations, and were treated as lepers.

He ended the book, saying, **“Turn thou us back to thee, O Jehovah, and we shall be turned back. Renew our days as of old. But thou have utterly rejected us. Thou are very angry against us”** (Lamentations 5:21-22).

## A Description of **Ezekiel**

In this book Ezekiel tells how God used him to speak to the people of Israel. Many times Ezekiel said **“the word of Jehovah came to me.”** He began the book by saying that in the fifth year of king Jehoiachin’s captivity he saw visions of God. The Chaldeans had carried away Jehoiachin king of Judah, and some other captives. They did that about eleven years before eventually destroying Jerusalem.

Ezekiel said he was among the captives by their river Chebar when the heavens opened and the word of Jehovah came to him. He

said, **“And I looked, and, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with a fire enfolding itself, and a brightness round about it, and out of the midst of it, as it were glowing metal, out of the midst of the fire. And out of the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures”** (Ezekiel 1:4-5).

He said the creatures looked like men. However, each one had three other faces. He said they had the face of a lion on the right side, one of an ox on the left side, and one of an eagle. The face of the eagle must have been on the back. Each one also had four wings. He said their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and their movements looked like flashes of lightning. He also spoke of some strange wheels that went with them. Most of what he described is very difficult to understand or to visualize. He said the noise of their wings was like the noise of great waters. Maybe it was something like the sound of Niagara Falls. And he said the firmament above them was like awesome crystal to look upon. He said, **“And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone. And upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above”** (Ezekiel 1:26). He said the figure had the appearance of glowing metal, as of fire, and there was brightness round about him. He said he fell on his face when he saw him. And he heard a voice speaking, which told him to stand up.

The voice called him “son of man.” Jesus also called himself the son of man. The voice told Ezekiel he was sending him to the sons of Israel who had rebelled against him. Jehovah said both they and their fathers had transgressed against him even to that very day. And he said the sons were impudent and stiff hearted. Jehovah told him to speak to them whether they listened or not, for they were a rebellious house.

Jehovah told him not to fear them nor their words, even if briars and thorns were with him, and even if he dwelt among scorpions. He said not to fear their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they were a rebellious house. He told Ezekiel to speak his words to them, whether they heard or not, for they were most rebellious. And he told Ezekiel not to be rebellious like that rebellious house.

Then he told him to open his mouth, and eat what he gave him. Ezekiel said he saw a hand come forth with a roll of a book in it. The book was opened, and in it were writings of lamentations and

mourning and woe. So he ate the roll, and it tasted to him like honey for sweetness.

The voice told him to go speak to the house of Israel. He said it was not a people of a foreign language that he could not understand. He said if he had sent him to them, they would listen to him. He said, **“But the house of Israel will not hearken to thee, for they will not hearken to me. For all the house of Israel are of a hard forehead and of a stiff heart”** (Ezekiel 3:7).

Jehovah told Ezekiel he had made his face hard against their faces, harder than flint. And again he said to fear them not, though they were a rebellious house. He called them a rebellious house thirteen times in the book of Ezekiel. He told Ezekiel to go to those of the (Babylonian) captivity, and speak to them whether they heard or not.

Ezekiel then said the Spirit lifted him up, and he heard a voice behind him praising Jehovah. He also heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures and the wheels beside them. He said the voice and the noise was “of a great rushing.” Maybe it sounded like a jet engine. He said he went in the heat of his spirit, with the hand of Jehovah strong upon him. He said he came to those of the captivity who dwelt by the river Chebar. And he sat there overwhelmed among them seven days. Such an awesome vision must have been an emotional trauma, and Jehovah knew he needed time to recover.

He said that after seven days, the word of Jehovah came to him. Jehovah said he had made him a watchman to the house of Israel. Therefore, he was to give them warning from him. Jehovah told Ezekiel that a wicked man would die in his iniquity if he did not repent. And if Ezekiel did not warn him, trying to save his life, then Ezekiel would also become guilty for his death. However, Ezekiel would be clear if he warned him, whether the man repented or not. And the same applied to Ezekiel if a righteous man turned from his righteousness and committed iniquity. That man would also die (unless he stopped sinning), but Ezekiel would be free of guilt if he warned him.

Sometime later Jehovah told him to take a tile, and lay it before him. He was to make a model of the city of Jerusalem on it. He was also to lay siege against it, with forts, a mound, camps, and battering rams all around it. He also said to take an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between him and the city. He was to set his face toward the city, and lay siege against it. Jehovah said it was to be a

sign to the house of Israel. He was also to lie on his left side for 390 days, then on his right side for 40 days. The 390 days were for Israel, and the 40 days were for Judah. But what those numbers mean is not clear.

He was also to take grain and other things in one vessel to make bread for himself. He was to eat twenty shekels of it per day, and also drink water by measure. Jehovah said the people of Jerusalem were going to eat and drink by measure, with fearfulness and in dismay, **“and pine away in their iniquity”** (Ezekiel 4:17).

He also had Ezekiel cut his hair. He was to divide it into three parts: one to burn, one to cut up, and one to scatter. He said because of all the abominations of Jerusalem he was against her, and he would have no pity. A third part would die with pestilence and be consumed with famine, a third part would fall by the sword, and a third part he would scatter to all the winds.

After that Ezekiel said he saw another vision. He was sitting in his house, with the elders of Judah sitting before him. He said the hand of Jehovah fell upon him. He said, **“Then I beheld, and, lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire, from the appearance of his loins and downward, fire, and from his loins and upward, as the appearance of brightness, as it were glowing metal”** (Ezekiel 8:2).

He said the Spirit took him by a lock of his head, and lifted him up (whether in the body or out of the body is not stated). He brought him in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the northern gate (of the temple). He said the image of jealousy was there, which provoked to jealousy. Which must refer to some idol of a false god. Ezekiel said that Jehovah told him to look toward the north. And when he did he saw the image of jealousy at the entry of the gate. Then Jehovah said to him, **“Son of man, see thou what they do, even the great abominations that the house of Israel commit here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? But thou shall again see yet other great abominations”** (Ezekiel 8:6).

Then Jehovah showed him pictures of every kind of creeping thing, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel. They were on the walls of an inner chamber in the temple. And seventy men of the elders of Israel stood before the pictures, offering incense in worship. Jehovah told Ezekiel they did not think he could see them. Jehovah also showed him women at the north gate who were weeping for Tammuz (a false god), and men near the

altar who were worshiping the sun. Jehovah said to him, **“Have thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have turned again to provoke me to anger”** (Ezekiel 8:17). Jehovah said he would deal with them in wrath, and would have no pity. He said he would not listen even if they cried with a loud voice to him.

Then Jehovah called out, and six men came with their weapons. There was also one in the midst of them having a writers case. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar. Then Jehovah commanded the man with the writers case to go through the city of Jerusalem. He was to mark the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that were done in it. And he told the others to go after him, and smite. Jehovah said, **“Kill utterly the old man, the young man, and the virgin, and little sons, and women, but come not near any man upon whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary”** (Ezekiel 9:6).

Ezekiel said that as they were smiting, he fell upon his face, and asked Jehovah if he would destroy all who remained of Israel. Jehovah said to him, **“The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness. For they say, Jehovah has forsaken the land, and Jehovah does not see”** (Ezekiel 9:9). Jehovah said he would have no pity.

After that the word of Jehovah came to him again, saying, **“Son of man, thou dwell in the midst of the rebellious house, that have eyes to see, and see not, that have ears to hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious house”** (Ezekiel 12:2). Jehovah told him to bring out all of his stuff for moving, in their sight, by day and by night. He was to dig through the wall (probably of his house), and carry it out that way. Therefore, he did so, carrying it upon his shoulder by night. Then he was to tell the people it was about the ruler of Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel. That is how they would go into exile and captivity.

The word of Jehovah again came to him. The people had been saying Ezekiel’s vision of destruction was for many days to come. Jehovah told him to tell them he was going to do it in their days. Again the word of Jehovah came to him. This time Jehovah uttered a curse against the false prophets. He said they had given men false hope. He said his hand would be against the prophets who saw false visions, and divined lies. Jehovah said they had seduced his people,

saying, Peace, when there was no peace. Jehovah said he would consume them in the coming destruction.

Then he told the son of man (Ezekiel) to set his face against the daughters of his people. They were prophesying out of their own heart. Jehovah uttered a woe to them. He said, **“And ye have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to kill the souls who should not die, and to save the souls alive who should not live, by your lying to my people who listen to lies”** (Ezekiel 13:19). Many modern Americans do that very thing. For money many doctors will murder innocent babies by abortion. And for money many lawyers will use every legal trick to defeat punishment for criminals, even the most heinous. And they use deceit to excuse what they do.

Ezekiel said the word of Jehovah came again to him. Jehovah spoke of stretching out his hand upon a land when it sins against him. He spoke of sending a famine, or evil beasts, or sword, or a pestilence, to cut off man and beast. Each time he mentioned one of those four plagues, he said that even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only their own souls by their righteousness. Then he said how much worse it would be when he sends all four upon Jerusalem. He said there would only be a remnant left.

Ezekiel said that the word of Jehovah came to him again. Jehovah said, **“What do ye mean, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the son’s teeth are set on edge? As I live, says the lord Jehovah, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel”** (Ezekiel 18:2-3).

Jehovah said the soul that sins would die. He then described a righteous man, and said such a man would surely live. And he said if the righteous man had a wicked son, then the son would die. And he said if that wicked son also had a son, and that son was righteous, then he would not die with his father.

Jehovah said to them, **“Yet ye say, Why does not the son bear the iniquity of the father?”** (Ezekiel 18:19). Jehovah said the soul that sins, it shall die. In the ten commandments Jehovah said that he would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. They must have misinterpreted those words. Yes, children suffer in this life when fathers sin, but that does not make them guilty. Their earthly

life may suffer when their father sins, but their eternal souls are not harmed.

Jehovah also said that if a wicked man turned from all his sin, and kept all his statutes, he would surely live and not die. Jehovah said, **“Have I any pleasure in the death of a wicked man? says the lord Jehovah, and not rather that he should return from his way, and live?”** (Ezekiel 18:23). Jehovah said to the house of Israel that if a righteous man turned from his righteousness and committed iniquity, then he would die. Also if a wicked man turned from his wickedness and did right, he would save his soul alive. Jehovah was not saying such a wicked man would escape all earthly punishment. He was speaking of a man’s spiritual salvation.

Then he said, **“Yet the house of Israel says, The way of the Lord is not equitable. O house of Israel, are not my ways equitable? Are not your ways inequitable?”** (Ezekiel 18:29). Jehovah said therefore he would judge them, each one according to his ways. And he urged them to make a new heart and a new spirit. He said, **“For why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him who dies, says the lord Jehovah, therefore turn yourselves back, and live”** (Ezekiel 18:31-32).

Again Ezekiel said that the word of Jehovah came to him. He said, **“And thou, son of man, will thou judge, will thou judge the bloody city [Jerusalem]? Then cause her to know all her abominations”** (Ezekiel 22:2). And he mentioned many of her sins, such as shedding blood, making light of father and mother, treating the foreigners in their land by oppression, wronging the fatherless and widows, committing adultery, taking bribes, and other such things. Jehovah said they had forgotten him.

He rebuked them, and said, **“And I will scatter thee among the nations, and disperse thee through the countries, and I will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shall be profaned in thyself, in the sight of the nations. And thou shall know that I am Jehovah”** (Ezekiel 22:15-16).

Again Ezekiel said the word of Jehovah came to him. Jehovah told him a parable of two women, the daughters of one mother. He said they were unfaithful in their youth in Egypt. Their names were Oholah the elder, and Oholibah her sister. Jehovah said they became his, and bore sons and daughters. He said Samaria was Oholah, and Jerusalem Oholibah. He said Oholah was unfaithful when she was his. She doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians. There-

fore he delivered her into the hand of the Assyrians. They made her naked, took her sons and daughters, and killed her with a sword.

Jehovah said that her sister Oholibah saw it, yet she was more corrupt in her unfaithfulness than her sister. She also doted upon the Assyrians. And she was defiled in the bed of love with the Babylonians. Jehovah said, **“Then my soul was alienated from her, just as my soul was alienated from her sister”** (Ezekiel 23:18). Therefore Jehovah said he would raise up her lovers against her, the Babylonians, Chaldeans, and all the Assyrians with them. He said they would deal with her in fury, and he described her destruction. Among other things he said she would be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, because she had forgotten him, and cast him behind her back.

Then Jehovah said to Ezekiel, **“Son of man, will thou judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare to them their abominations”** (Ezekiel 23:36). Jehovah said they had committed adultery, and blood was on their hands. He said they had slain their sons to their idols, and came the same day into his sanctuary to profane it. He said Oholah and Oholibah were adulterous lewd women. He said, **“And righteous men, they shall judge them with the judgment of adulteresses, and with the judgment of women who shed blood, because they are adulteresses, and blood is on their hands”** (Ezekiel 23:45). He said he would bring a company against them. They would kill their sons and their daughters, and burn their houses with fire. He said he would recompense their lewdness, and cause it to cease out of the land.

Again Ezekiel said the word of Jehovah came to him. Jehovah said, **“Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this selfsame day; the king of Babylon drew close to Jerusalem this selfsame day”** (Ezekiel 24:2). He told him to utter a parable to the rebellious house. Then he told about a boiling caldron with meat and bones in it. Jehovah said he was going to do that to the bloody city. Moreover, he was going to burn the empty caldron to consume the scum of it. The scum represented the filthiness of her lewdness. Jehovah said, **“According to thy ways, and according to thy doings, they shall judge thee, says the lord Jehovah”** (Ezekiel 24:14).

Again Ezekiel said the word of Jehovah came to him. Jehovah told him he was going to take the desire of his eyes away from him, but he was not to show any mourning for the dead. Ezekiel said that after speaking to the people in the morning, at evening his wife

died. And he did in the morning as he was commanded. And when the people asked him why, he said the word of Jehovah came to him, and told him to speak to the house of Israel. Jehovah said he was going to profane his sanctuary, the pride of their power, the desire of their eyes, and they would do as Ezekiel had done. They would not mourn nor weep, but would pine away in their iniquities. He said Ezekiel would be a sign to them.

Again Ezekiel said the word of Jehovah came to him. Jehovah told him to set his face toward the sons of Ammon. He said to prophesy against them. Jehovah rebuked them for rejoicing when his sanctuary was profaned, and the land of Israel was made desolate, and the house of Judah went into captivity. He said he was going to destroy them. Jehovah also condemned Moab, Edom, and the Philistines for being vindictive toward the house of Judah. He also said he was going to destroy them.

Ezekiel said that in the eleventh year, the word of Jehovah came to him about Tyre. That was probably the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, the year that Jerusalem fell. Jehovah said that because Tyre rejoiced at the destruction of Jerusalem, he was going to destroy her and make her a bare rock. He said she would be a place for the spreading of nets.

Here is how that prophecy was fulfilled. The city of Tyre was destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar, and made a bare rock by Alexander of Macedonia. A couple of centuries after its destruction by Nebuchadrezzar, Alexander attacked the nearby island where the former survivors had fled and built a new city. He used the rubble of the old city to make a causeway to the island. Hence, the land was eventually scraped clean of the city, and its rubble cast into the sea. Sometimes it takes centuries before Jehovah's prophecies are fulfilled, but they always are.

Again Ezekiel said the word of Jehovah came to him. And he said, **"Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the lord Jehovah: Thou seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was thy covering ..."** (Ezekiel 28:12-13). He went on to describe some of his glory. Jehovah said, **"Thou were the anointed cherub who covers. And I set thee, so that thou were upon the holy mountain of God. Thou have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou were perfect in thy ways from the day that thou were created, till unrighteousness was found in thee"** (Ezekiel 28:14-15).

Some men claim those words describe the devil. However, God did not call him that. Jehovah spoke several parables to Ezekiel about different things. It is more likely the above description is also a parable. Jehovah said of him that his heart was lifted up, and he had corrupted his wisdom. Therefore, he cast him to the ground, turned him to ashes, and made him a horror. Jehovah said he would nevermore have any being.

Again Ezekiel said the word of Jehovah came to him. Jehovah told him to set his face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and all Egypt. Jehovah compared Pharaoh to a great monster in the midst of his rivers, who claimed it was his own. Jehovah said he would drag him out with hooks in his jaws, and cast him into the wilderness. Jehovah also said he was going to make the land of Egypt a desolation and a waste. He said it would be uninhabited forty years. After that he would bring them back from their captivity. But they would then be the basest of kingdoms, never again to rule over other kingdoms.

Several times the word of Jehovah came to Ezekiel against Egypt and Pharaoh its king. He said he was going to destroy them with great destruction. And he was going to make the land of Egypt desolate and waste.

After that Jehovah told Ezekiel to speak to the sons of his people, and tell them about a watchman, a man who warned the people of danger that was coming. Jehovah said he was making Ezekiel a watchman to the house of Israel, to warn them. Jehovah told him that if he did not warn the wicked man, the wicked man would die in his iniquity, but Ezekiel would also become guilty. However, if he warned him, then Ezekiel would be free of guilt.

Then Jehovah told Ezekiel the people were worried that because of their guilt they could not live. Jehovah told Ezekiel to say to them that he had no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but that he would turn from his way and live. And he said again that a righteous man would not be spared if he turned from his righteousness, but a wicked man would be if he turned from his wickedness. And he again said, **“Yet the sons of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equitable. But as for them, their way is not equitable”** (Ezekiel 33:17).

Then Jehovah told Ezekiel that the people talk about him, and come to hear him, but they do not hearken to what he says. Jehovah said, **“And, lo, thou are to them as a very lovely song of he who**

**has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument. For they hear thy words, but they do not do them”** (Ezekiel 33:32). Jehovah said when it comes to pass (the great destruction), then they would know that a prophet had been among them.

Next Jehovah told Ezekiel to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. He said, **“Thus says the Lord Jehovah: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the sheep?”** (Ezekiel 34:2). Jehovah told how they had preyed upon the sheep, and had not helped them. As a result the sheep were scattered and became food for the beasts.

Therefore Jehovah said he was against the shepherds. Jehovah said that he himself would search for the sheep, and would deliver them from where they had been scattered. He said he would bring them into their own land, and would feed them with good pasture. He said, **“I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, says the lord Jehovah”** (Ezekiel 34:15). Moreover, he said, **“And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David. He shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David ruler among them. I, Jehovah, have spoken it”** (Ezekiel 34:23-24).

He said he would make a covenant of peace with them, and they would dwell secure. And he said there would be showers of blessing. All those things obviously refer to the Christ and his church, which is the spiritual house of Israel. Jesus was that new David, and he referred to himself as the good shepherd (see John 10:14).

Ezekiel again said the word of Jehovah came to him. Jehovah told him the house of Israel had defiled their land with bloodshed and with idols. Therefore, he scattered them among the nations. Yet they profaned his holy name there. Nevertheless, he had regard for them. Jehovah said he was going to sanctify his great name, which they had profaned among the nations. He was going to gather them, and bring them back to their own land.

Next Ezekiel said the hand of Jehovah was upon him, and brought him in the Spirit of Jehovah. He set him down in the midst of a valley full of very dry bones. And Jehovah asked him if they could live. Ezekiel answered, and said, **“O lord Jehovah, thou know”** (Ezekiel 37:3).

Then the book says, **“Again he said to me, Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of**

**Jehovah. Thus says the lord Jehovah to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah. So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I beheld, and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them.**

**“Then he said to me, Prophecy to the wind. Prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army” (Ezekiel 37:4-10).**

Jehovah told Ezekiel those bones were the whole house of Israel. They said their bones were dried up, and their hope was lost. Jehovah told him to prophesy to them. He was to say that Jehovah was going to open their graves, and cause them to come out of them (in a figurative sense). And he was going to bring them into the land of Israel. He said he would put his spirit in them, and they would live. And they would know that Jehovah had spoken it and performed it.

Again Ezekiel said the word of Jehovah came to him. And Jehovah said, **“Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the ruler of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophecy against him”** (Ezekiel 38:2). Jehovah said he was against Gog, and he was going to bring him forth with all his great army and many peoples with him. He said that in the latter years he would come into the land of Israel that had recovered from its destruction. And he and all his hordes would come like a storm, like a cloud to cover the land.

The lord Jehovah said of Gog, **“It shall come to pass in that day, that things shall come into thy mind, and thou shall devise an evil plan”** (Ezekiel 38:10). Jehovah said Gog was going to plunder the land of unwalled villages, the waste places that were now inhabited, and the people who were gathered out of the nations. Jehovah said that Gog, his mighty army, and the many peoples with him were going to come against his people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. Jehovah said that he was going to bring him against his land, so that the nations would know him, and he would be

sanctified in him. Jehovah then described how he was going to destroy him and the many peoples with him. He said, **“And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel”** (Ezekiel 39:7).

Jehovah also said the house of Israel would know that he was Jehovah. And the nations would know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity. Then he said he would now bring back the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel. And they would dwell securely in their own land. He said, **“For I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the lord Jehovah”** (Ezekiel 39:29).

The last twenty percent of the book of Ezekiel is one of the most mysterious and controversial in the Bible. It contains a detailed description of a temple complex which a heavenly agent showed him in a vision. It also tells about sacrifices that were to be made there, and the priests who were to be involved. It also describes the land allotment assigned to the Israelites. What it describes is very different from what existed before. And what it describes has never come to pass.

There are, of course, many theories about it. The only one that makes sense to me says those things were to be done by the exiles who came back after being scattered when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. However, what they eventually built was much less grand. Indeed, the prophet Haggai was sent by Jehovah to rebuke those who returned for neglecting to build any temple at all for him. Therefore, it is no surprise the temple that Ezekiel described was never built.

Ezekiel said that Jehovah brought him in the visions of God into the land of Israel. And he set him down upon a very high mountain. Then Ezekiel said he saw a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed. And he was standing in the gate. The man said to him, **“Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thy heart upon all that I shall show thee. For thou art brought here to the intent that I may show them to thee. Declare all that thou see to the house of Israel”** (Ezekiel 40:4).

The agent then began to take Ezekiel around the temple complex of the vision. And as he went he measured many of the parts. Among other things he described the main wall and its gates. He described the outer court and its gates. He described the inner court

and its gates, chambers, side rooms, and furnishing. He described the temple and its rooms, walls, side chambers, decorations, and furnishings. And he described the altar for burnt offerings.

The description takes several pages in a modern Bible. Some drawings and models of what he described have been created, and can be seen on the internet. You can also find maps there showing the distribution of the land as Ezekiel described it.

After that Ezekiel said he saw the glory of Jehovah come into the house (of God). Jehovah spoke to him out of the house, and told him that would be the place of his throne. He said the house of Israel would no more defile his holy name by their whoredom, and by the dead bodies of their kings. He told them to put away those things far from him, and he would dwell in the midst of them forever. And he told Ezekiel to tell them about the house, and all the forms of it, including the laws of it.

Then he described the altar and gave its measurements. He also described the land that was to be allotted to them at the temple area. Next he spoke of their rulers. He said, **“Thus says the lord Jehovah: Let it suffice you, O rulers of Israel. Remove violence and spoil, and execute justice and righteousness. Take away your exactions from my people, says the lord Jehovah”** (Ezekiel 45:9). He told them to have just measures, which means they should be right and not unfair.

After that Ezekiel described a river that flowed out of the temple. It kept getting greater the farther it went. He said the banks were lined with many trees. And when the river reached the sea it would heal the waters, and would have abundant fish in it. He said the trees would be for food, and the leaves for healing. All of that is also very mysterious. Perhaps the river symbolizes the church of Christ that spread out from Jerusalem, and the sea symbolizes the population of the world.

Then Ezekiel described the boundaries of the nation, and the boundaries of each of the twelve tribes. He also described the boundaries of the sanctuary area, the land for the Levites, and the land for those who labored in the city. Finally, he described the gates of the city. There was one gate for each of the twelve tribes, three at each of the four geographic directions. The last words in the book say, **“And the name of the city from that day shall be, Jehovah is there”** (Ezekiel 48:35).

## A Description of **Daniel**

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon first conquered Jerusalem when Jehoiakim was king of Judah. At that time he plundered some of the vessels of the temple. He also took captive some of the talented young Jews. And he had them trained for three years to prepare for service in his palace. Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The ruler of the eunuchs called them Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Sometime afterward Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him, but he forgot what it was. And because none of his wise men could tell him what it was he was going to kill them all. However, God revealed it to Daniel. So Daniel told it to the king. He said the king saw a great awesome appearing image standing before him. He said, **“As for this image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay”** (Daniel 2:32-33). Then he saw a stone cut out without hands. The stone destroyed the image, and became a great mountain that filled the whole earth. That was the dream.

Then Daniel gave the interpretation of it. He said, **“Thou, O king, are a king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory. ... Thou are the head of gold”** (Daniel 2:37-38). He said the kingdoms that came after him would be inferior: one of silver, one of bronze, and one of iron mixed with clay. He said the last kingdom would be strong as iron, able to break in pieces. But being mixed with clay it would be a divided kingdom. He said that in the days of those kings the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. It would break in pieces all those kingdoms, and would stand forever (which is Christ’s church). Then Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel many gifts, and made him ruler over the province of Babylon.

Sometime later Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold ninety feet high. And he commanded everybody to fall down and worship it whenever they heard the sound of music. When he learned that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused he had them cast into the burning furnace. However, to his astonishment, Nebuchadnezzar saw four men walking in the furnace without harm. And he said the fourth looked like a son of the gods. When the three men came

forth Nebuchadnezzar praised their God. He also promoted them in the province of Babylon.

Sometime later Nebuchadnezzar sent a message to all the peoples. He first praised God. Then he told how he had a dream that made him afraid. Again only Daniel could interpret it. Nebuchadnezzar said the vision he saw was of a great tree, and all flesh ate the fruit of it. Then a watcher and holy one came down from heaven, and cried aloud to hew down the tree. He commanded his heart to be changed from a man's heart to a beast's heart, and seven times were to pass over him. He said the sentence was **“to the intent that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will, and sets up over it the lowest of men”** (Daniel 4:17).

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that he, the king, was the tree. And he said the decree of the Most High was that he be driven from men, and dwell with the beasts of the field. He would be made to eat grass as oxen. He said seven times would pass over him till he knew that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will. The seven times probably meant either seven months or seven years. Daniel then urged the king to turn from his sins so that he might have peace for a longer time.

At the end of twelve months, while Nebuchadnezzar was boasting about himself, it happened. His hair eventually grew like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws. Nebuchadnezzar said that at the end of the days his understanding returned to him, and he returned to the throne. Then he said, **“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are truth, and his ways justice. And he is able to abase those who walk in pride”** (Daniel 4:37).

The book next tells about his grandson Belshazzar when he was king. During a great feast he and his guests drank of the vessels of Jehovah's temple, while praising the gods of metal, wood, and stone. In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand wrote four words upon the plaster of the wall. When the king saw it he trembled, and cried aloud to bring in the wise men. However, only Daniel could interpret the words.

Daniel reminded him how the Most High God had humbled the pride of Nebuchadnezzar by making him live like a beast for a while. He said Belshazzar had not humbled himself even though he knew all that. He drank wine from the vessels of God's house, and

praised the gods of metal, wood, and stone, which are lifeless. And he had not praised the God who gives and controls life.

Then he read the four words and interpreted their meaning. He said God had numbered his kingdom and brought it to an end. He had weighted him in the balances and he was found wanting. And his kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Belshazzar rewarded Daniel, but that night the king was slain, and Darius the Mede became king.

Darius set a hundred twenty satraps (governors) over his kingdom, with three presidents over them. One of the three was Daniel. And because he had an excellent spirit the king thought to set him over the whole realm. However, the other men sought to find something against Daniel, but they were unable because he was faithful.

They told themselves they would have to find it against him concerning the law of his God. Therefore, they persuaded king Darius to make a decree that whoever made a petition of any god or man for thirty days, except of him, should be cast into the den of lions. And according to the law of the Medes and Persians it could not be changed.

When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went to his house. And he knelt upon his knees three times a day as was his habit. Somehow those men found out about it, and they reported it to the king. When the king heard their words, he was very unhappy. And he set his heart to deliver Daniel. He labored until sunset, but those men assembled to him, and reminded him that the decree could not be changed.

Therefore, the king commanded Daniel be cast into the den of lions. He said to Daniel, **“Thy God whom thou serve continually, he will deliver thee”** (Daniel 6:16). Then he went to his palace, fasted, and passed a sleepless night. Early in the morning he went quickly to the den, and cried out to Daniel. He said, **“O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou serve continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?”** (Daniel 6:20). Daniel said his God had sent his agent to shut the lions’ mouths, because he had done no wrong.

The king was exceedingly glad, and commanded Daniel be brought up out of the den. Then he commanded to cast his accusers into the den. And they were immediately killed by the lions. So what they tried to do against Daniel happened to them. Then king Darius wrote to all peoples, telling them of a decree for all men to

tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. Darius said he is the living God. And he went on to praise the dominion of God and his wonders.

The last half of the book of Daniel tells about several visions he had. The first was a dream. He said he saw the four winds of heaven break forth upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up out of it, each different from the other. They were all fierce beasts. One was like a lion, one was like a bear, and one was like a leopard. The fourth was different from the others, but even fiercer. And he told about its horns, one of which had eyes like a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

He then said, **“I beheld till thrones were placed, and one who was ancient of days sat. His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames, and the wheels of it burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened”** (Daniel 7:9-10). That sounds much like the description in the book of Revelation of Jesus and other things in heaven.

Daniel said he looked till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed by fire. Then he spoke of someone like a son of man, whose dominion and kingdom would be forever. That refers to Jesus and his church. Daniel said the visions troubled him, and he asked what it meant. The man he spoke with said the great beasts were four kings, but the sanctified of the Most High would receive the kingdom, and possess it forever and ever.

Daniel said he had another vision in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar. He saw a ram with two horns, a he-goat that attacked the ram, and horns that grew from the he-goat. Daniel said he sought to understand the vision, and someone like the appearance of a man stood before him. Then he heard a man’s voice saying, **“Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision”** (Daniel 8:16).

He said the two horns of the ram were the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough he-goat was the king of Greece. The great horn between his eyes was the first king (Alexander). The other horns were other kingdoms. Daniel said he fainted, and was sick certain days. The shock of the vision must have made him sick. He said he wondered about the vision, but none understood it.

In the first year of king Darius, Daniel said he understood about the seventy years that Jeremiah wrote about. Jeremiah had prophesied that Jerusalem would lay waste for seventy years (see Jeremiah 25:11 & 29:10). So Daniel prayed to God with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. He prayed and confessed the sins of the people. He said they deserved their punishment, and he asked God to forgive them.

Daniel said that while he was praying, the man Gabriel, whom he had seen in the first vision, flew swiftly, and touched him. He told him he had come to give him wisdom and understanding. He said to him, **“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I have come to tell thee, for thou art greatly beloved. Therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision”** (Daniel 9:23).

Then Gabriel told a remarkable prophecy. He described lengths of time in weeks; a week symbolizing seven years. Among other things he said the anointed one (the Christ) would come 483 years after the command to rebuild Jerusalem. (Jerusalem was rebuilt in the middle of the fifth century BC.) He said the Christ would be cut off, and Jerusalem would again be destroyed. (Forty years after Christ was crucified Jerusalem was destroyed.) He said the Christ would make a covenant, and cause the sacrifice to cease. (Christianity is the new covenant, and there are no more required animal sacrifices.)

The book tells about another vision Daniel had. He first saw a spectacular looking man whose face was like lightning, and his eyes as flaming torches. Daniel said he fainted when he saw him, but an agent from heaven lifted him up. And he said to him, **“Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou set thy heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard. And I have come for thy words’ sake”** (Daniel 10:12).

Then he told him a lot of other things about kingdoms of the future. But Daniel told him he did not understand, nor do I. The agent said the words were sealed till the time of the end. That means he was not supposed to understand. The agent then said to him, **“But go thou thy way till the end is. For thou shalt rest, and shall stand in thy lot at the end of the days”** (Daniel 12:13).

## A Description of Hosea

Hosea was a prophet about the time the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed. He prophesied both before and after that happened. When Jehovah first spoke to Hosea, he told him to get a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom. Jehovah said the land committed great whoredom. Therefore, Hosea married a woman named Gomer. From what Jehovah told him to do, she must have been a whore. She bore him two sons and one daughter.

The woman seems to symbolize the nation of Israel, and her children were its citizens. The children's names mean "God will scatter," "not an object of mercy," and "not my people." Then Jehovah told them to strive with their mother because she was not his wife. He said she should put away her whoredoms and her adulteries. Otherwise he would strip her naked, and kill her with thirst. He also said he would have no mercy upon her sons, for they were the sons of whoredom (bastards). Then Jehovah described all the destruction he was going to bring against her because she forgot him.

After that Jehovah spoke many words of compassion and affection toward her. He said he would betroth her to him forever, in righteousness, and in justice, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. He said he would have mercy upon her who had not obtained mercy. Remember, Jehovah was not talking about an individual, a whorish woman. He was talking about a race of people who had been unfaithful to him. For it was only after most of them had been killed in his wrath that he showed compassion to the survivors who repented.

Then Hosea said, **"Hear the word of Jehovah, ye sons of Israel, for Jehovah has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land"** (Hosea 4:1). He said there was nothing but evil deeds, some of which he named. He said therefore the land mourns. He said they would stumble day and night, and he would destroy their mother (the nation). Jehovah said, **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because thou have rejected knowledge, I also will reject thee, that thou shall be no priest to me. Since thou have forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy sons"** (Hosea 4:6).

He said they (probably the priests) fed on the sins of his people,

and set their heart on their iniquity. That is exactly what the entertainment industry does in modern America. It has grown rich and fat by pandering to the lusts of the people, especially the younger ones. They sell them music, movies, and other things that glorify violence, vulgarity, folly, sin, and wickedness.

Jehovah wanted to spare them. He said, **“O Ephraim, what shall I do to thee? O Judah, what shall I do to thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goes away early”** (Hosea 6:4). They transgressed his covenant, and dealt treacherously against him. He said that even the priests were like troops of robbers. He said the people made the king glad with their wickedness.

Jehovah said, **“Woe to them! For they have wandered from me. Destruction to them! For they have trespassed against me. Though I would redeem them, yet they have spoken lies against me”** (Hosea 7:13). He said they sowed to the wind, and they would reap the whirlwind. He said they had deeply corrupted themselves. Regarding Ephraim, Jehovah said, **“All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them. Because of the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more. All their rulers are rebels”** (Hosea 9:15).

Jehovah urged them to sow in righteousness, and reap according to kindness. But he said they had plowed to wickedness and reaped iniquity. Therefore, they would be destroyed. Yet because of his compassion he was reluctant to destroy them utterly. He said, **“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I cast thee off, Israel? ... My heart is turned within me. My compassions are kindled together”** (Hosea 11:8).

He pleaded with them, saying, **“O Israel, return to Jehovah thy God, for thou have fallen by thine iniquity”** (Hosea 14:1). He told them to take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good. Jehovah said he would heal their backsliding, and love them freely. He said they would blossom as the lily.

The book concludes, **“Who is wise, that he may understand these things, prudent, that he may know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right, and the just shall walk in them. But transgressors shall fall therein”** (Hosea 14:9).

## A Description of Joel

Joel was a prophet of Jehovah, and he warned of destruction to come. First would be plagues of insects, including the locust. Jehovah warned the people, saying, **“Awake, ye drunkards, and weep, and wail, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth”** (Joel 1:5). He likened the swarms of insects to a foreign army. And he told them to lament and be confounded because of the destruction.

Then Jehovah appealed for the people to repent. He said, **“Yet even now, says Jehovah, turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. ... and turn to Jehovah your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness, and relents of the evil”** (Joel 2:12-13). He told them he would send them grain, and new wine, and oil. And he would no more make them a reproach among the nations. He said, **“Fear not, O land. Be glad and rejoice, for Jehovah has done great things”** (Joel 2:21). He said he would restore to them what the insects had eaten. He said they would praise the name of Jehovah their God, and would know that he was in the midst of Israel.

Then he spoke words that Peter quoted (see Acts 2:17-21) on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles after Jesus' resurrection. Jehovah said he would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. And he told of great wonders that would be done. He said, **“And it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved”** (Joel 2:28-32).

Then he told the nations to prepare for war. He reversed the famous words of Isaiah that proclaimed peace (see Isaiah 2:4). Instead he said, **“Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears. Let the weak say, I am strong”** (Joel 3:10). He told the nations to come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there he would sit to judge all the nations round about. He called it the valley of decision.

Jehovah said he would be a refuge to his people. He said they would know that he was Jehovah their God, and he would bless them. He said Egypt and Edom would be destroyed, for the violence done to the sons of Israel. He said, **“But Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation”** (Joel 3:20).

## A Description of **Amos**

Amos was a herdsman who spoke the words of Jehovah in the days of king Uzziah of Judah, and the second king Jeroboam of Israel. However, he prophesied primarily about Israel. For the word Israel occurs thirty times in the book, while the word Judah only occurs four times.

He first told of God's wrath against eight nations: Damascus (Syria), Gaza (the Philistines), Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Israel. Each time he rebuked one of them he began by saying, **"Thus says Jehovah: For three transgressions of [the nation], yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment of it, because ..."** (Amos 1 & 2). Jehovah was going to punish the six Gentile nations because they committed cruelty in one way or another, especially against his people. And he was going to punish Judah because they rejected his law.

The rest of the book is about Israel. After saying he was going to punish Israel he mentioned some of their sins, such as oppressing the poor. Jehovah said to the sons of Israel, **"You only I have known of all the families of the earth. Therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities"** (Amos 3:2). Then Amos asked several questions like, **"Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no net is set for him?"** (Amos 3:5). The answers were all obviously no. Then he asked, **"Shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah has not done it?"** (Amos 3:6). The answer was no. It was no then, and it is still no. For nothing can happen without God either doing it himself, or allowing it to occur.

Jehovah told them to go ahead and multiply transgression. He said, **"For this pleases you, O ye sons of Israel, says the lord Jehovah"** (Amos 4:5). Five times he described different plagues that he sent against them (such as drought and pestilence), and each time he said, **"Yet ye have not returned to me"** (Amos 4). He therefore told them to hear his word, which was a lamentation over the house of Israel. He said, **"The city that went forth a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went forth a hundred shall have ten left, to the house of Israel"** (Amos 5:3).

He warned them to seek him and live, lest he devour the house of Joseph. He said they trampled the poor, and built expensive houses. Jehovah told them, **"For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins—ye who afflict**

**the just man, who take a bribe, and who turn aside the needy in the gate**” (Amos 5:12). He said therefore the prudent man would keep silent in such a time, for it was an evil time. In other words, they were so evil that any man who spoke of truth and justice would be persecuted.

Jehovah said, **“Woe to you who desire the day of Jehovah! Why would ye have the day of Jehovah? It is darkness, and not light”** (Amos 5:18). Jehovah said he hated their feasts and their solemn assemblies. He told them to take away the noise of their songs, and let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. He said woe to those who were at ease in Zion. Those who feasted, and enjoyed music and revelry, but were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. He said they would be the first to go away captive.

Jehovah said the songs of the temple would be wailings in that day, and the dead bodies would be many. He rebuked the people for things like oppressing the poor, and cheating in business. He said, **“Surely I will never forget any of their works”** (Amos 8:7). He said the land would tremble because of it, and everyone in it would mourn. And he told about more terrible things that he was going to bring upon them. However, Amos ended his book with words of encouragement, saying God would restore his people and bless them.

### A Description of **Obadiah**

This is the smallest book in the Old Testament. It is a prophecy about Edom, the nation founded by Esau the brother of Jacob. Jehovah said he was sending nations against her (Edom) in battle. He said, **“The pride of thy heart has deceived thee, O thou who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, who says in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?”** (Obadiah 1:3). Jehovah said shame would cover him for the violence done to his brother Jacob, and he would be cut off forever.

When Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed, the Edomites joined with the destroyers. Jehovah told them not to rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor seize their possessions. He also told them not to interfere with those who escaped, nor deliver them up. But apparently the Edomites were cruel toward the defeated Jews. And so Jehovah said, **“As thou have done, it**

**shall be done to thee**” (Obadiah 1:15). Jehovah said a fire would consume them, and there would not be any remaining of the house of Esau. And so it is.

## A Description of **Jonah**

Jehovah said to Jonah, **“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me”** (Jonah 1:2). But Jonah fled from the presence of Jehovah, and got on a ship. However, Jehovah sent a great wind upon the sea that threatened the ship. The mariners cast Jonah overboard when he told them that would save the ship. And when they did the storm ceased.

The book says that Jehovah prepared a great sea creature to swallow Jonah, and he was in its belly three days and three nights. Then he prayed to Jehovah. So Jehovah told the sea creature to vomit Jonah out upon dry land. This time Jonah did as Jehovah commanded him.

The book says that Nineveh was an exceedingly great city. Jonah entered it and cried out, **“Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown”** (Jonah 3:4). All the people believed God, and proclaimed a fast. When God saw how they turned from their evil way, he relented. However, Jonah was displeased and angry. Jonah said he even wanted to die. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, and perhaps he thought they were a threat to Israel. The time did come when the Assyrians destroyed the ten tribes of Israel.

Jonah went out to the edge of the city, and waited to see what would happen. Jehovah made a gourd to grow up to give shade for him, but he caused it to wither the next morning. Then the sun grew hot, and God prepared a sultry east wind, which caused Jonah to faint. So he again wanted to die. When God asked him if it was well for him to be angry about the gourd, Jonah said yes.

Then Jehovah said to him, **“Thou have had regard for the gourd, for which thou have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night. And should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand men who cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?”** (Jonah 4:10-11).

## A Description of **Micah**

This book is the word of Jehovah that came to Micah about Samaria and Jerusalem in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. It is similar to the book of Isaiah by having many difficult passages in it.

Jehovah said, **“Woe to those who devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand”** (Micah 2:1). Therefore, Jehovah said he devised an evil against them, from which they would not remove their necks. And they would say, **“We are utterly ruined”** (Micah 2:4).

Jehovah said to them, **“Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly? But of late my people have risen up as an enemy”** (Micah 2:7-8). And he told some of the evil they were committing. He rebuked the leaders, and described how cruel and brutal they were to his people. Jehovah said they would cry to him, but he would not answer them because they did evil. And he rebuked the prophets who made his people to err, and who practiced extortion.

He continued to rebuke the leaders of the house of Israel. He said they abhorred justice, and perverted all equity. He said they built up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. He said the rulers, priests, and prophets, were crooked and greedy, yet they claimed Jehovah was with them. He said for their sake Zion would be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem would become heaps (of rubble).

After that he told about the latter days, when the mountain of Jehovah’s house would be established. And many nations would go there to be taught his ways. Then he quoted the same words that Isaiah said about not learning war any more. He said all the peoples would walk in the name of their god, but we would walk in the name of Jehovah our God forever and ever.

After that Micah told the mountains and foundations of the earth to hear what Jehovah says, for Jehovah had a controversy with his people. Jehovah said, **“O my people, what have I done to thee? And in what have I wearied thee? Testify against me”** (Micah 6:3). He said he brought them up out of the land of Egypt where they were in bondage. He told them to remember the righteous acts of Jehovah.

Then Micah asked with what he should come before Jehovah.

Should it be with burnt offerings? Jehovah said, **“He has shown thee, O man, what is good. And what does Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?”** (Micah 6:8). That is one of the most beautiful and meaningful passages in the Bible. O how much better the world would be if everybody did those things.

Then Micah said, **“Woe is me! ... The devout man has perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood. They hunt every man his brother with a net”** (Micah 7:1-2). He said the best of them was as a briar. He advised not to trust a neighbor, or have confidence in a friend, or even a wife. For they were all rebels. He said a man’s enemies were the men of his own house. Micah said, **“But as for me, I will look to Jehovah. I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me”** (Micah 7:7).

### A Description of Nahum

The book begins, **“The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”** This book is estimated to have been written about 150 years after the book of Jonah. The preaching of Jonah caused the citizens of Nineveh to repent, thus sparing them destruction. However, Nahum wrote about a later generation that was apparently too wicked to repent. Therefore, he wrote this book, which prophesies the destruction of Nineveh.

Nahum first said, **“Jehovah is a jealous God and avenges. Jehovah avenges and is full of wrath. Jehovah takes vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserves *wrath* for his enemies”** (Nahum 1:2). However, he also said that Jehovah was slow to anger. He described some of God’s power, and said that Jehovah was good. But he will make a full end of those who devise evil against him, and who counsel wickedness.

After that Nahum foretold the violence within Nineveh when it was conquered. He said the chariots were like torches raging in the streets. He said the defenders stumbled in their march and fled in retreat. He told how the city was looted of its treasures. Finally, he said, **“She is empty, and void, and waste. And the heart melts, and the knees smite together, and anguish is in all loins, and the faces of them all have grown pale”** (Nahum 2:10).

Then Jehovah said, **“Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and rapine. The prey departs not”** (Nahum 3:1). Jehovah said he

would cast abominable filth upon her, and make her vile. He said, **“All who hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee, for upon whom has not thy wickedness passed continually?”** (Nahum 3:19).

## A Description of **Habakkuk**

The book begins, **“The burden which Habakkuk the prophet saw.”** Habakkuk asked Jehovah how long he would cry, and Jehovah would not hear. He told of iniquity, perverseness, and strife. He said the wicked man surrounded the righteous man. Therefore justice went forth perverted.

Then Jehovah said, **“Behold ye scoffers, and look, and wonder marvelously. For I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you”** (Habakkuk 1:5). Paul quoted that scripture when he warned about rejecting Jesus (Acts 13:41), but in this book it refers to the Chaldeans (of Babylonia). Jehovah raised them up against the people of Judah. Jehovah said they were fearful and dreadful.

Jehovah said the wicked man (probably the Chaldeans) treats men as animals to catch in his net. Therefore he sacrifices to his net. Habakkuk asked if he would not spare to kill the nations continually. He said the nations would curse him. And he said, **“Because thou have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder thee, because of men’s blood, and for the violence done to the land, to the city and to all who dwell therein”** (Habakkuk 2:8).

The last one-third of the book is a prayer of Habakkuk. It is like the prayers of the psalms. He asked Jehovah for mercy. And he told of Jehovah’s awesome power. He said fiery bolts went forth at his feet, and the eternal mountains were scattered. He said, **“Thou went forth for the salvation of thy people, for the salvation of thine anointed”** (Habakkuk 3:13).

Habakkuk said, **“I will joy in the God of my salvation. Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength. And he makes my feet like hinds’ feet, and will make me to walk upon my high places”** (Habakkuk 3:18-19). He loved and trusted God, and so should we all.

## A Description of **Zephaniah**

This book is the word of Jehovah that came to Zephaniah in the days of Josiah king of Judah. It first tells of destruction that God was going to bring upon several nations. Then he would gather his people and bless them. God said he was going to stretch out his hand upon Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Jehovah said he was going to punish the men who say in their heart, **“Jehovah will not do good, nor will he do evil”** (Zephaniah 2:1-2). Alas, that is a very popular believe these days.

Jehovah said he was going to bring distress upon men. He said they would walk like blind men, because they had sinned against him. Zephaniah warned them, saying, **“Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth who have kept his ordinances. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. It may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah’s anger”** (Zephaniah 2:3).

Then Jehovah told of the destruction of the Philistines, the sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, the Ethiopians, and Assyria. And he rebuked Jerusalem. He said, **“Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice. She received not correction. She trusted not in Jehovah. She did not draw near to her God”** (Zephaniah 3:1-2). He said her rulers were roaring lions, and her judges were evening wolves. He said her prophets were airy and treacherous men. And her priests profaned the sanctuary, and did violence to the law.

Jehovah said he was going to take away out of the midst of them those who rejoiced in her pride. He would leave an afflicted and poor people, and they would take refuge in the name of Jehovah. Then he told the daughter of Zion to sing, and Israel to shout. For Jehovah had taken away her judgments, and cast out her enemy. He said the King of Israel, even Jehovah, was in the midst of her, and would rejoice over her with joy. He said he would bring back their captivity.

## A Description of Haggai

The book says the word of Jehovah came to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the high priest. It came by Haggai the prophet in the second year of Darius the king (of Persia). That was after some Jews had returned from Babylonian captivity. Jehovah rebuked the people for saying it was not time for them to build Jehovah's house, yet they dwelt in their paneled houses. Jehovah said he called for a drought upon the land because of it.

Then Zerubbabel and Joshua, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of Jehovah and the words of Haggai the prophet. After that Haggai, Jehovah's agent, gave his message to them. Jehovah said he was with them. He stirred up their spirits, and they worked on the house of Jehovah in the sixth month.

In the seventh month Jehovah told Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel and Joshua and the remnant of the people. He was to say, **“Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? And how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes as nothing? Yet now be strong ...”** (Haggai 2:3). And again Jehovah said he was with them.

In the ninth month the word of Jehovah came again to Haggai. Jehovah said he was going to bless them from that day. Jehovah also told him to say to Zerubbabel the governor of Judah that he was going to shake the heavens and the earth, and **“In that day, says Jehovah of hosts, I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, says Jehovah, and will make thee as a signet. For I have chosen thee, says Jehovah of hosts”** (Haggai 2:23).

## A Description of Zechariah

This book also contains many passages that are difficult to understand. It begins by saying the word of Jehovah came to Zechariah in the eighth month of the second year of Darius. That was two months after it first came to Haggai. Jehovah said he was greatly displeased with their fathers. Therefore, he told Zechariah to say to them, **“Thus says Jehovah of hosts: Return to me, says Jehovah of hosts, and I will return to you, says Jehovah of hosts”** (Zechariah 1:3).

Later Zechariah had a vision of different colored horses that Jehovah sent to walk to and fro through the earth. But what that means is unclear. During the vision an agent of Jehovah told Zechariah to cry out, **“Thus says Jehovah of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy”** (Zechariah 1:14). Jehovah said he was greatly displeased with the nations that were at peace, for they made the affliction (of Jerusalem) worse. The agent told him, **“Cry yet again, saying, Thus says Jehovah of hosts: My cities shall yet overflow with prosperity, and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem”** (Zechariah 1:17).

Zechariah then said he saw four horns, which represented the nations that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. But he was told they were going to be cast down. He said Jerusalem would be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the large population. Jehovah told the daughter of Zion to sing and rejoice, for he was coming, and would dwell in the midst of her. Jehovah did come in the form of Jesus Christ, and Jerusalem is now a city inhabited without walls.

Next Zechariah saw Joshua the high priest standing before the agent of Jehovah, and Satan standing on his right side to be his adversary. Jehovah said to Satan, **“Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan. Yea, Jehovah who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?”** (Zechariah 3:2). Then they took off the filthy garments of Joshua, and clothed him with rich apparel. And Jehovah, through the agent, told Joshua that if he kept his (Jehovah’s) ways, then he would judge his house and keep his courts.

Then Zechariah saw a large flying roll. The agent told him it was a curse that went over the face of the land. And it was against the thief and him who swears falsely by the name of Jehovah. After that the agent told him to lift up his eyes, and look again. When Zechariah asked what it was, he said it was the ephah. Its lead cover was lifted up, and he showed him a woman sitting inside of it. The book says, **“And he said, This is Wickedness. And he cast her down into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth of it”** (Zechariah 5:8).

Then Zechariah said he saw two women come forth. He said they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between earth and heaven. That may be the source of the myth that agents from heaven (commonly called angels) are women

with wings. The woman in the ephah symbolized wickedness. The winged women probably also symbolize something, for they are never called agents (angels).

Zechariah looked again, and saw four chariots come out from between two mountains of brass. The horses of each chariot were of a different color: red, black, white, and grizzled. When he asked the agent what they were, he said they were the four winds of heaven, which went from standing before Jehovah. All of that is another riddle in this book. One thing is clear about it. Jehovah sent forth various forces upon the earth to do his will. He did not just sit back and watch what happened. He did not then, and he does not now.

Zechariah said the word of Jehovah came again to him. Jehovah said he was jealous for Zion. He said, **“And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and ye shall be a blessing. Fear not. Let your hands be strong”** (Zechariah 8:13). And he told them what they should do. He said they should speak truthfully to their neighbor, and execute judgment of truth and peace in their gates. They were to devise no evil in their hearts against their neighbor, and love no false oath. He said those were things he hated. Then Jehovah said, **“Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of Jehovah”** (Zechariah 8:22).

Then Jehovah spoke words that applied to Jesus on the cross. He said, **“And they shall look to me whom they have pierced. And they shall mourn for him, as a man mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as a man who is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem”** (Zechariah 12:10-11). And that was indeed true of all the righteous souls there.

Jehovah said the idols would no longer be remembered. He said he would cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land. And he said some other things about prophets that are difficult to understand. Then he spoke the words that Jesus applied to himself and his apostles when he was betrayed (see Matthew 26:31): **“Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered”** (Zechariah 13:7).

Next Jehovah said he would gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city would be taken. Then Jehovah would go and fight those nations. He said his feet would stand on the mount of Olives, and it would be split in half creating a very great valley. He said there would be no light that day, except at evening there would

be light. He said on that day living waters would go out of Jerusalem, half toward the eastern sea, and half toward the western sea. He said Jerusalem would be lifted up, and men would dwell there safely. After that Jehovah would smite all the peoples, who warred against Jerusalem, with a plague that would consume their flesh. And everyone who was left of all those nations would go up yearly to worship Jehovah, and keep the feast of tabernacles. Those and other things he said are very hard to understand. There are many mysteries in the book of Zechariah.

### A Description of **Malachi**

The book says it is the burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi. Jehovah said, **“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear?”** (Malachi 1:6). He said the priests despised his name by offering polluted bread upon his altar, and by saying it was not wrong to offer the blind for sacrifice. Jehovah said, **“Present it now to thy governor. Will he be pleased with thee, or will he accept thy person?”** (Malachi 1:8).

Malachi said, **“Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?”** (Malachi 2:10). And Jehovah rebuked them for dealing treacherously with the wives of their youth. Jehovah said he made them one (see Genesis 2:24), because he sought a godly seed. Juvenile delinquency is always greater among broken homes. Jehovah told them he hated putting away (divorce).

Then he said, **“Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words. Yet ye say, How have we wearied him? In that ye say, Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of Jehovah, and he delights in them, or Where is the God of justice?”** (Malachi 2:17). That same attitude is very prevalent these days also. Many say that Jehovah loves “everyone who does evil.” And many deny that God is just.

Jehovah accused them of robbing him by withholding the tithe. In this most sinful generation of Americans God is literally being robbed. For church buildings everywhere are broken into and robbed. Jehovah told them to test him. He told them to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so there would be food in his house. Then he would open to them the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there would not be room enough for it.

Jehovah also said their words were against him. They were saying it was vain to serve God. And they called the proud happy. He said, **“Yea, those who work wickedness are built up. Yea, they challenge God, and escape”** (Malachi 3:15). And that also happens in modern America, which breaks my heart and angers me. The book says, however, the day comes, burning as a furnace, and all the proud, and all who work wickedness, will be burned up. But those who fear his name will go forth joyfully.

Then he foretold the coming of John the immerser (see Matthew 11:14): **“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and fearful day of Jehovah comes. And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse”** (Malachi 4:5-6).

## A Description of **THE NEW TESTAMENT**

*beginning with*  
**Matthew**

The book begins with a genealogy of Jesus Christ. It starts with Abraham and ends with Joseph the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus. There are forty men and three women named in the genealogy. Another woman is mentioned but not named. After that it tells about his birth. Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but he discovered she conceived a child before they were married. So he was not going to marry her. However, an agent of the Lord told him in a dream the child was from the Holy Spirit. He said she would have a son, and he should call his name JESUS (which means savior).

After Jesus was born, wise men from the east saw his star, and they came to Jerusalem looking for him. They said to Herod, **“Where is he who is born king of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and have come to worship him”** (Matthew 2:2). The chief priests and scholars said the Christ would be born in Bethlehem. Then Herod told the wise men to inform him after they found the child, because he also wanted to worship him. When they found him they worshiped him, and gave him many gifts and treasures. But they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country another way.

After they left an agent of the Lord told Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt, because Herod was going to seek the child to destroy it. When Herod saw he was scorned by the wise men, he became very angry. Then he had all the baby boys in Bethlehem killed, from two years old and under. After Herod died an agent of the Lord told Joseph to return to the land of Israel. So he went into parts of Galilee, and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

Next the book tells about John the immerser. John’s clothing was camel’s hair with a leather belt, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He preached in the wilderness of Judea, and the people went out to him to be immersed in the Jordan, confessing their sins. Jesus was also immersed by John, but it was not because he had sinned. Jesus said it was **“to fulfill all righteousness”** (Matthew 3:15).

Then the book tells about Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. He fasted there forty days and forty nights. Afterward the devil tempted him three ways. The first was about commanding stones to

become bread. The second was about casting himself from the pinnacle of the temple to prove he was the Son of God. The third was about giving him all the kingdoms of the world if he would worship him. Each time Jesus quoted a scripture to oppose the temptation.

After that Jesus began to preach. He told people to repent, for the kingdom of the heavens had approached. Then he called four fishermen—Peter, Andrew, James, and John—to follow him. The book says, **“And Jesus went around all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good-news of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people”** (Matthew 4:23). It says his fame spread. They brought many who were afflicted in various ways, and he healed them. Also many multitudes from all around followed him.

Having seen the multitudes, he went up onto a mountain. When he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he taught them. He first spoke what is now called the beatitudes, which means perfect blessedness. He told of nine things that describe those who are blessed. They are things like being meek, being merciful, and being pure in heart. And he mentioned a reward for each one, such as inheriting the earth, obtaining mercy, and being able to see God.

The last two of the beatitudes are about persecution. And they say heaven is for those who are persecuted because of righteousness. Indeed, he said, **“Blessed are ye when they revile you, and persecute you, and say every evil word, being deceitful against you because of me. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, because your reward is great in the heavens, for so they persecuted the prophets before you”** (Matthew 5:11-12).

Jesus taught many lessons in his sermon on the mount. I will only select a sample of them, for this is merely a brief description of the Bible. He told them that unless their righteousness was better than the scholars and Pharisees, they would not enter into the kingdom of the heavens. I suspect he would say the same thing about most of the scholars and religious people of our day.

Then he contrasted several things about their past teachings with what he taught. Five times he said, **“Ye have heard that it was said ...”** (Matthew 5). He mentioned the commands against murder, adultery, and swearing falsely. And each time he increased the prohibition. He said to not even insult a brother, or even look at a woman lustfully, or swear at all.

He also told them to love their enemies, do good to those who

hated them, and pray for those who mistreated them. That would seem to encourage peace and reconciliation, and not more conflict. And he said not to be anxious about food and drink and clothing, **“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”** (Matthew 6:33). And he told them what we now call the golden rule: **“All things therefore, as many as ye may want that men should do to you, so also do ye to them, for this is the law and the prophets”** (Matthew 7:12).

He also told them to enter by the narrow gate. He said the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction. And most people go that way. He said the gate that leads to life is narrow, and the way restricted. That means there are many popular things we cannot do if we want to go to heaven. Jesus said only a few go the narrow way. Remember that when you wonder why most people do not live the way God wants.

He also warned them, **“Not every man who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of my Father in the heavens”** (Matthew 7:21). He said many would come to him in that day (of judgment), and claim they did many good things in his name. But he would reject them, because they did not live right. Jesus gave many other lessons in his sermon on the mount, which I encourage you to read in the Bible itself.

When he came down from the mountain he healed some men. Afterward, on the way across the sea (of Galilee), a great storm developed, causing the waves to cover the boat. He was sleeping, and his disciples woke him, saying, **“Save us, Lord, we are perishing”** (Matthew 8:25). He answered, **“Why are ye cowardly, O ye of little faith?”** (Matthew 8:26). Then he rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. The men marveled, and wondered what kind of man he was, that even the winds and sea obeyed him.

When he came to his own city they brought a paralyzed man to him. Jesus told the man his sins were forgiven. When some scholars said he was blaspheming, Jesus asked them which was easier, to tell a man his sins were forgiven, or to heal him. Then he said, **“But that ye may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins (then he says to the paralyzed man), After rising, take up thy bed, and go to thy house”** (Matthew 9:6). When the multitudes saw the man get up they marveled and glorified God.

Next the book tells how a woman who had an issue of blood twelve years was healed. She said if she only touched his garment she would be healed, and it happened. When Jesus saw it he praised her faith. After that he raised a little girl, the daughter of a ruler, from the dead. And then he healed two blind men who besought him. He warned them not to tell anyone, but they disobeyed him, and proclaimed it in all that land. Was that not very ungrateful of them? The book says Jesus continued to go about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and healing the afflicted.

The Pharisees frequently condemned Jesus for what they said was violating the sabbath. For example, there was a man with a withered hand in a synagogue where he was. And they asked him if it was permitted to heal on the sabbath. Jesus reminded them how they lift up sheep that fall into a pit on the sabbath. And he said, **“How much therefore a man is superior to a sheep. So then it is permitted to do good on the sabbath”** (Matthew 12:12). Nevertheless, after he healed the man, they went out and held a consultation how they might destroy him.

On another occasion, when he was speaking to the multitudes, his mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him. When told about it, he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, **“Behold, my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in the heavens, he is my brother, and sister, and mother”** (Matthew 12:49-50).

Jesus told many parables about the kingdom of the heavens. One was about sowing seed, which fell on four different types of soil. Some never even took root, while others became very fruitful. Jesus said the seed was the word of God, and the soil was the hearts of different kinds of people. Another parable compared the kingdom of the heavens to leaven. Just a small amount makes the bread better. He also compared the kingdom to a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered from every kind. When it was full, they separated the good from the useless. He said it would be like that at the end of the age, meaning this world.

The book tells how Jesus fed five thousand men with only five loaves and two fishes. It also tells how he walked on the water to his disciples who were in the boat. When Peter saw it, he asked Jesus if he could walk on the water to go to him. Jesus told him to come. However, when he saw the boisterous wind, he became afraid, and began to sink. When he cried out for help, Jesus took hold of him, and said, **“O thou of little faith, why did thou**

**doubt?”** (Matthew 14:31). When he entered into the boat, they said he really was the Son of God.

After that a Canaanite woman kept begging him to save her daughter from a demon. Jesus finally told her, **“It is not right to take the children’s bread and cast it to the house dogs”** (Matthew 15:26). She was a humble and wise woman. Therefore she agreed, and said that even the house dogs ate of the crumbs of their masters. Jesus said her faith was great, and he healed her daughter. And should we not persist in prayer for a worthy cause, and not become discouraged or offended?

Then Jesus made a grand entrance into Jerusalem with many people following him. He entered into the temple of God, and cast out all the merchants, saying, **“It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer, but ye made it a den of robbers”** (Matthew 21:13). It was not only wrong for them to be there, but they must have been selling at exorbitant prices to the visitors. The book says the lame and blind came to him in the temple, and he healed them. Then he went out of the city to Bethany (about two miles from Jerusalem), and lodged there.

The next morning when he returned to the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people demanded to know by what authority he did those things. He would not tell them, because they refused to answer his question. Therefore, the Pharisees counseled together how to trap him in his talk. They sent out disciples, who flattered him, and then asked him a trick question. They said, **“Is it permitted to give tribute to Caesar or not?”** (Matthew 22:17). Since the tribute money had Caesar’s image and inscription on it, Jesus told them, **“Therefore, render the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God”** (Matthew 22:21). When they heard it, they marveled and left him.

One of the Pharisees, a lawyer, tested him by asking him which was the great commandment in the law. Jesus replied, **“Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law, and the prophets”** (Matthew 22:37-39).

Afterward he spoke to the scholars and Pharisees. Three times he said to them, **“Woe to you, scholars and Pharisees, hypocrites!”** (Matthew 23:13-15). And each time he gave an example of

their hypocrisy, such as devouring widows houses, yet praying long in pretense. Then he said **“Woe to you, ye blind guides”** (Matthew 23:16). He said they were foolish and blind men, and he gave examples to prove it. Then four more times he said, **“Woe to you, scholars and Pharisees, hypocrites!”** (Matthew 23:24, 25, 27, 29). He said to them, **“Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how will ye escape from the damnation of hell?”** (Matthew 23:33).

Then Jesus spoke with both compassion and foreboding toward the city. He said he wanted to save it, but it was going to become desolate. When Jesus was going out of the temple, his disciples showed him the buildings of it. However, Jesus said that every stone would be thrown down. After he came to the mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately, and asked him when those things would be. They also asked him what was the sign of his coming and the end of the age.

First he told them what to expect in life before the end of the world. He said there would be false Christs and false prophets; wars and rumors of wars; famines, plagues, and earthquakes; persecution and lawlessness. He said, **“But he who endures to the end, this man will be saved”** (Matthew 24:13). He said the good-news of the kingdom would be proclaimed in the whole world, then the end would come. Then he told them about the destruction of Jerusalem.

After that he told about the end of the world, and he told parables about being prepared. First he told about bondmen whom their lord had appointed over his service. The faithful would be rewarded, but the unfaith would be punished. Then he told a parable about ten virgins invited to a wedding. Five were wise and five were foolish. The wise took olive oil for their lamps. However, the foolish did not, and when the bridegroom delayed they ran out of oil. When they went to get more they missed the wedding festivities. After the parable, Jesus said, **“Watch therefore, because ye know not the day nor the hour in which the son of man comes”** (Matthew 25:13).

Next he told a parable about using our abilities and resources productively, for we are going to be judged thereby. He also told how, at the judgment in heaven, the righteous would be rewarded for being kind to the needy. But those who were not would be cast into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his agents.

During the Passover feast with his twelve apostles, Jesus said one of them was going to betray him. They were all exceedingly

sorrowful, and each one began to ask if it was he. When Judas asked, Jesus replied, **“Thou have said”** (Matthew 26:25), which is an expression meaning yes. After singing a hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, **“All ye will be caused to stumble by me in this night, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered”** (Matthew 26:31). He said that after he was raised, he would go before them into Galilee. Peter responded he would never be caused to stumble, but Jesus said he would deny him thrice before a cock sounded.

Jesus took them to a place called Gethsemane, and told them to sit there and wait. Then he went ahead, fell on his face, and prayed, **“My Father, if it be possible, may this cup [his torture and crucifixion] pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I want, but as thou”** (Matthew 26:39). Then he returned to the disciples, and found them sleeping. He went and prayed a second time, and prayed a similar prayer. When he returned he found them again sleeping. Then he went and prayed a third time, asking the same thing.

When he returned the third time, Judas (who had left during the meal) came with a great multitude with swords and clubs from the chief priests and elders of the people. Judas gave them a sign, saying whomever he kissed was he. So after he kissed Jesus, they seized him. And they led him away to Caiaphas the high priest. Peter followed from a distance. The chief priests, the elders, and the whole council sought testimony against Jesus, so they could put him to death, but they were not successful.

Therefore, the high priest asked him directly if he was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said, **“Thou have said. Nevertheless I say to you, Henceforth ye will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of the sky”** (Matthew 26:64). The high priest tore his clothes, and said he blasphemed. They all condemned him to death, and began to abuse him physically, spitting in his face, and beating him.

Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. He was accused on three separate occasions of being with Jesus, but he denied it each time. After the third time a cock sounded, and Peter remembered Jesus’ prediction. Then he went outside and wept bitterly. When it became morning the chief priests and the elders held consultation together to condemn Jesus to death. Then they bound him, and took him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

When Judas saw that he was condemned, he repented and returned the thirty silver pieces the chief priests and elders had paid him. He said, **“I sinned, having betrayed innocent blood.”** But they replied, **“What is it to us? See thou to it”** (Matthew 27:4). So he cast the silver in the temple, and went out and hanged himself.

When the governor asked Jesus if he were the king of the Jews, he said he was. It was a custom during a feast for the governor to release one prisoner to the crowd. He offered either Jesus or Barabbas, a notorious prisoner. Persuaded by the chief priests and elders, the crowd chose Barabbas. After trying unsuccessfully to dissuade the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. And after scourging Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

They took him into the Praetorium, and the whole band of soldiers ridiculed and abused him. Then they took him to a place called Golgotha (meaning the place of a skull), and crucified him. And they set up over his head his accusation: **“THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS”** (Matthew 27:37). The book says that all who passed by reviled him, shaking their heads. Likewise the chief priests with the scholars, elders, and Pharisees, ridiculed him. Also the robbers who were crucified with him reviled him the same way.

The book says that from the sixth hour (noon) darkness developed over the land for three hours. Then Jesus cried out in a great voice, saying, **“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is, My God, my God, why have thou forsaken me?”** (Matthew 27:46). God forsook him then so that he could become our redeemer, and save our souls. After that Jesus died, and the book says, **“And many women were there watching from afar, who followed Jesus from Galilee, serving him, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee”** (Matthew 27:55-56). At evening a rich man named Joseph, a disciple of Jesus, requested his body from Pilate. He laid it in his own new sepulcher that was hewed out in the rock, and he rolled a great stone to the door of it. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Near dawn on the first day of the week, those two women came to see the tomb. A great earthquake occurred when an agent of the Lord came down from heaven, and rolled away the stone. The book says his appearance was as lightning and his clothing white as snow. The agent told the women not to fear. He said the Lord was raised as he said. He told them to go quickly and tell his disciples he

was raised from the dead, and goes before them into Galilee. As they went, Jesus met them. He greeted them, and also told them to inform his brothers to go into Galilee to see him.

When Jesus met his disciples on the mountain in Galilee, the book says they worshiped him. Yet there were still some who doubted. Why do men harden their hearts so?

The book ends with these words: **“And Jesus having come, he spoke to them, saying, All authority in heaven and on earth was given to me. After going, make ye disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, as many as I commanded you. And lo, I am with you all the days, until the end of the age. Truly”** (Matthew 28:18-20).

## A Description of **Mark**

**“The beginning of the good-news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”** The book first tells about John the immerser. He was in the wilderness, and preached an immersion of repentance for remission of sins. He also preached of a man mightier than he. He meant Jesus, who also came and was immersed by him (but not for remission of sins). When Jesus came up out of the water a voice spoke to him out of the heavens. It said, **“Thou are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”** (Mark 1:11). Then the Spirit drove him into the wilderness with the wild beasts. He was there forty days tempted by Satan.

After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the good-news. He said the time was fulfilled, and the kingdom of God had come near. He told the people to repent and believe the good-news. Then he called four fishermen to follow him—Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John.

Jesus went to other towns, healing and casting out the demons. The book tells of a leper who came and besought him. Jesus healed him, and warned him to tell nobody. However, he began to proclaim it much, and spread it abroad. Therefore, Jesus could no longer enter openly into a city, but was outside in desolate places. Was it not very ungrateful and cruel of that leper to disobey him? He probably did not anticipate the trouble he caused Jesus, but that is no excuse. It should be a lesson for all of us. Disobedience to God

always causes trouble, for God and men. People who live selfishly will never get to heaven.

After that he called Levi (also called Matthew), a tax collector, to follow him. When he was dining in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and his disciples. The scholars of the Pharisees criticized him for that. However, Jesus said the strong had no need of a physician, but those faring badly. He said, **“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners for repentance”** (Mark 2:17).

Jesus continued to travel about, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him. Then he went up onto a mountain, and called those whom he wanted. He appointed twelve men, so that they might be with him. Also that he might send them forth to preach, and have authority to heal diseases and to cast out demons. Then the book names them.

When the multitude came together again Jesus was apparently so zealous to help them that those with him said he was beside himself. And they went out to grasp him. However, acting like the devil (which means slanderer), the Pharisees even used the good he did against him. They said, **“He has Beelzebub, and, By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons”** (Mark 3:22). But Jesus taught them with parables that a house divided cannot stand. And if Satan had risen up against himself, he could not stand, but would have an end.

Jesus had gone to his fatherland. However, they knew him as a carpenter, and were offended by his wisdom and mighty works. So he said to them, **“A prophet is not without honor, except in his fatherland, and among his kin, and in his house”** (Mark 6:4). He marveled because of their unbelief, and went around the villages teaching.

Then he summoned the twelve, and began to send them forth in pairs, giving them authority over the unclean spirits. He told them not to take extra provisions, and when they entered a house, to lodge there until they departed. They were to shake the dust from their feet where they were not received. He said it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city. He told them to preach that men should repent. The book says that King Herod thought Jesus was John the immerser raised from the dead. Then it tells how and why Herod had killed John.

After Jesus' apostles returned, he told them to go to a desolate

place and rest. However, many saw them going and they ran together before them. When Jesus saw the great multitude, he felt compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. And he taught them many things. When it became late he fed them with five loaves of bread, and two fishes. There were five thousand men who ate.

Jesus began to tell his disciples that it was necessary for the Son of man to suffer many things. He said he would be rejected by the leadership and be killed, then after three days he would rise. After taking Jesus aside, Peter began to rebuke him for saying that. However, Jesus rebuked Peter, saying, **“Go thee behind me, Satan, because thou think not the things of God, but the things of men”** (Mark 8:33). Then he called in the multitude with his disciples. He said that whoever wanted to follow him, had to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him. And he asked what it would profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and forfeited his soul.

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John up onto a high mountain alone. Then he was transfigured before them. Also Elijah and Moses came and spoke with him. Peter wanted to build three tabernacles, one for each of them. However, a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of it. It said, **“This is my beloved Son. Hear ye him”** (Mark 9:7). Then they saw no man anymore, except Jesus with them.

When he and his disciples came to Capernaum, he asked them what they had been deliberating on the way. They were silent, for they had discussed among each other who was greater. Jesus said to them, **“If any man wants to be first, he will be last of all, and helper of all”** (Mark 9:35). Then he took a child, and set it in the midst of them. And he spoke of rewards and punishments for helping or hindering such little ones who believed in him. He also told them to remove anything that caused them to stumble, even if it were a hand or an eye. He said it was better to enter life crippled, than to be cast into the unquenchable fire of hell.

Then Jesus made his grand entrance into Jerusalem with many people following him. He went into the temple and drove out the merchants. He accused them of making it a den of robbers. The scholars and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him. They were afraid of him, because all the people were awed at his doctrine.

Later they came to him, and wanted to know by what authority he was doing those things. But he would not tell them, because they would not answer his question. Then he began to speak to them in parables. He told of a man who planted a vineyard, leased it to farmers, and went on a journey. When it was time to receive the fruits, he sent bondmen to them. However, they abused them, and later killed his son whom he sent. Those Jews knew he spoke the parable against them, and they sought to seize him, but feared the multitude.

Jesus sat opposite the treasury, and watched how the multitude cast in their money. Many rich men cast in much, but one poor widow cast in only two mites. Jesus said she cast in more than all of them, because she cast in all she had, her whole living.

When they were going out of the temple, one of his disciples said for him to look at what kind of stones and buildings there were. Jesus told him there would not be left one stone upon another that would not be brought down. As they sat upon the mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately. They asked when those things would be.

Jesus warned them not to be led astray. He said there would be wars, earthquakes, famines, and troubles, but they were the beginnings of travails. Then he told them to expect severe persecution, even from within their families. He said, **“And ye will be hated by all men because of my name, but he who endures to the end, this man will be saved”** (Mark 13:13). Then he told them what to look for, and what to do, when Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. And he warned them of false Christs and false prophets. Finally, he told them what would happen at the end of the world.

Two days before the Passover Jesus was relaxing in Bethany, and a woman anointed him with very costly ointment. Some were indignant, calling it a waste that could have been sold and given to the poor. However, Jesus defended her, saying she did it beforehand for the burial. He said, **“And truly I say to you, wherever this good-news may be preached in the whole world, also what she did will be told for a memorial of her”** (Mark 14:9). Then Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests, so that he might betray him to them. They were glad, and promised to give him silver.

After that, while Jesus ate the Passover with the twelve, he said that one of them was going to betray him. They began to be sorrowful, and say, one by one, “Not I?” Jesus said it was written about

him. After singing a hymn, they went out to the mound of Olives. They came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples to wait until he prayed. The book says, “**And he takes Peter and James and John with him, and began to be greatly disturbed, and very distressed**” (Mark 14:33). He said his soul was deeply grieved, to the point of death. He told them to remain and watch. And having gone forward a little, he fell on the ground, and prayed that, if possible, the hour might pass from him.

Then he returned, and found them sleeping. He asked Peter if he could not watch one hour. He said, “**Watch ye and pray that ye may not enter into temptation. Truly, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak**” (Mark 14:38). Then he departed, and prayed the same way. After the third time, he told them to sleep, and take their rest.

Then Judas came with a great multitude with swords and clubs from the chief priests, scholars, and elders. The betrayer told them whomever he kissed was he. So he came to Jesus, called him Rabbi, and kissed him much. Then they seized him, and all his disciples fled. Jesus was led away to the high priest. And all the chief priests, elders, and scholars assembled together.

After hearing some conflicting testimony, the high priest asked Jesus if he was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. When Jesus said he was, the high priest tore his clothes. He said he blasphemed, and asked what it seemed to them. They all condemned him as deserving death, and began to abuse him, spitting in his face, and striking him.

In the morning they bound Jesus, and delivered him up to Pilate. When Pilate asked Jesus if he was the king of the Jews, he said he was. During a feast Pilate would release to them one prisoner. Pilate asked the crowd if they wanted Jesus released. However, they demanded Barabbas, a murderer, instead. Pilate tried to dissuade them. He wanted to know what evil Jesus had done, but they cried out even more to crucify him. So he released Barabbas. And after scourging Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

The soldiers led him to the Praetorium, and called together the whole band. They mocked and ridiculed Jesus, and then led him out to the place called Golgotha (meaning the place of a skull) to crucify. The inscription of his accusation was, “**THE KING OF THE JEWS**” (Mark 15:26). They also crucified two robbers with him, one on each side of him. The book says that all who passed by

railed at him, wagging their heads. Likewise, the chief priests and the scholars mocked him.

At the sixth hour (noon) darkness occurred over the whole land for three hours. Then the book says, “**And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a great voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why have thou forsaken me?**” (Mark 15:34). God forsook him on the cross so that we could be saved. Then Jesus expired, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

At evening a councilman named Joseph took his body, and laid him in a sepulcher hewn out of rock. And he rolled a stone to the door. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses watched. Then very early morning on the first day of the week, they came to the sepulcher, and saw a young man sitting. They were alarmed, but he told them not to be, that Jesus was raised. He told them to go tell his disciples and Peter that he goes before them into Galilee. They will see him there. So they fled from the sepulcher with trembling and astonishment.

The book says Jesus appeared to several people, but his apostles would not believe their testimony. Afterward he appeared to them, and upbraided their unbelief and hard heart, because they did not believe the witnesses. Among other things, he said to them, “**Having gone into all the world, preach ye the good-news to the whole creation. He who believes and is immersed will be saved, but he who does not believe will be damned**” (Mark 16:15).

The book ends, saying that Jesus was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And those men went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs (such as miracles) that followed.

### A Description of **Luke**

This book says it was written to inform Theophilus, which means lover of God. It begins with the story of a priest named Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth. They were both righteous before God. However, they had no children, and were both advanced in age. An agent of the Lord (Gabriel) appeared to him in the temple, and said his plea had been heard, and his wife Elizabeth would bear a son. He was to call his name John. And among other things, he said he would turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God.

Zacharias asked how he would know that, because he and his wife were old. The agent said because he did not believe his words, he would be mute until they came to pass. When the days of Zacharias' service were fulfilled he returned to his house, and his wife conceived.

Then the agent Gabriel was sent by God to Mary of Nazareth in Galilee. She was a virgin betrothed to Joseph. He told her she was highly favored, and blessed among women. He said she was going to conceive and bear a son. And she was to call his name JESUS. He said he would be great, would be called the Son of the Most High, and God would give him the throne of his father David. He also told her about Elizabeth, her kinswoman. Then Mary said, **“Behold the maid-servant of the Lord. May it happen to me according to thy word”** (Luke 1:38).

After that Mary went with haste to the house of Zacharias, and greeted Elizabeth. Then they both praised and thanked God. Mary dwelt with Elizabeth three months and then departed. She probably stayed until after John was born. Soon after he was born Zacharias' mouth was opened, and he praised God. The book says all the people who dwelt around them feared. And they wondered what the child would be, for the hand of the Lord was with him. The book says the child grew, and became strong in spirit. And was in the desolate regions until his manifestation to Israel.

It came to pass in those days that Caesar Augustus gave a decree to enroll all the world. Therefore, each went to his personal city. Joseph went to Bethlehem because they were of the patriarchy of David. While they were there Mary brought forth her son. She laid him in the feed trough, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The book says there were shepherds nearby, keeping watch by night over their flock. Then an agent of the Lord stood near them. They feared greatly, but the agent told them not to fear. He said he brought them good-news of great joy for all people. And he told them about the birth of Christ. Then they saw a great multitude of the heavenly host praising God. After that they went to him. When they saw the child, they reported what happened.

When Jesus was twelve years old, his parents unknowingly left him behind in Jerusalem. They had gone there for Passover. And they thought he was with the others in their group that was returning home. However, when they saw he was not there they went

back. The book says, “**And it came to pass after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and questioning them**” (Luke 2:46). And all who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

His mother told him that she and his father were seeking him sorrowing. He replied, “**Why is it that ye were seeking me? Had ye not known that I must be among the things of my Father?**” (Luke 2:49). Nevertheless, he returned and was subordinate to them. The book says he increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and men.

Next the book tells about the ministry of John the son of Zacharias. He was in the wilderness, and preached an immersion of repentance for remission of sins. He rebuked the multitudes who went out to him. When they asked what they should do, he told them to share what they had with the needy. He told the tax collectors to be honest. And he told the soldiers not to be abusive or unfair, and be content with their wages.

The book says that during the immersion of all the people, Jesus was also immersed. After which the Holy Spirit descended on him as a dove, and a voice from heaven said, “**Thou are my beloved Son. In thee I am well pleased**” (Luke 3:22).

Next the book says that Jesus was beginning to be about thirty years old. And it gives a genealogy of him, starting with Joseph and ending with Adam. Seventy-five men are named. After that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness forty days. He ate nothing in those days, and afterward he was hungry. Then the book tells about three ways the devil tempted him there.

After that he came to Capernaum and was teaching them on the sabbath day. The next day Jesus asked Simon (Peter) if he could enter his fishing boat to teach from, because the multitude pressed upon him. When he finished he told Simon to put out his nets for a catch. Simon said they had toiled all night without taking anything, but at his word they would let down the net. And when they did they enclosed a great multitude of fishes.

They beckoned to their partners in the other boat for help, and both boats were filled with so many that they sank lower in the water. When Simon saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, and said, “**Depart from me, because I am a sinful man, Lord**” (Luke 5:8). But Jesus told him to fear not, henceforth he would be catching men. And they forsook everything and followed him.

Next the book tells how he healed a paralyzed man. He had been lowered in a bed from a hole his friends made in the roof above Jesus because of the crowd. After that it tells how he called Levi, a tax collector, and how the scholars and Pharisees criticized him for eating with tax collectors and sinners. They also criticized him and his disciples often for what they thought was violating the sabbath, but he always proved them wrong. Nevertheless, they became infuriated, and deliberated with each other what they might do to him.

The book says that after spending all night in prayer to God, the next morning Jesus chose twelve of his disciples. He called them apostles (which means sent), and the book names them. Large numbers of people came to hear Jesus, and to be healed of their diseases.

Then he lifted up his eyes to his disciples, and said, **“Blessed are the poor, because the kingdom of God is what belongs to you. Blessed are those who hunger now, because ye will be filled. Blessed are those who weep now, because ye will laugh. Blessed are ye, when men will hate you, and when they will exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, because of the Son of man. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers did in the same way to the prophets.**

**“However, woe to you the rich, because ye have received your consolation. Woe to you who are filled now, because ye will hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, because ye will mourn and weep. Woe when men will speak well of you, for their fathers did in the same way to the false prophets”** (Luke 6:20-26).

He also said some of the things he taught them in the sermon on the mount that is recorded in the book of Matthew (5-7). After that the book tells how he healed the bondman of the Centurion at Capernaum. Then he went to another city with his disciples and a large multitude. As he came near, an only begotten son of a widow had died, and was being carried out. There was a large crowd of the city with her. The book says, **“And when the Lord saw her, he felt compassion toward her, and said to her, Weep not”** (Luke 7:13). Then he touched the coffin, and told the young man to rise. So he sat up and began to speak. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God. The report of that went forth in the whole of Judea, and the region all around.

Jesus was eating in the house of Simon a Pharisee. And a sinful

woman brought some ointment to him. She went behind near his feet. Then she wet them with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. She also kissed his feet much, and anointed them with the ointment. The Pharisee said to himself, that if Jesus were a prophet he would know what kind of woman she was. So Jesus spoke a parable to him about two debtors, one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not repay, the creditor forgave them both.

Jesus asked Simon which would love him most. Simon said he supposed it was the one to whom he forgave most. Jesus said he judged correctly. Then he applied it to him and the woman. He contrasted her treatment of him with that of Simon, who gave him no water for his feet, no kiss, and no oil for his head. Then he told the woman her sins were forgiven. And he said to her, **“Thy faith has saved thee. Go in peace”** (Luke 7:50).

The book says he traveled about by city and village, announcing and preaching the good-news of the kingdom of God. The twelve men were with him. Also certain women, having been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, served him from the things they possessed. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out.

Then Jesus summoned the twelve, and gave them power over demons, and to heal diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God. He told them to take no provisions, and remain in whatever house they entered until they departed that city. He also told them to shake the dust from their feet of any city that did not receive them. Therefore they went. When they returned they reported to him as many things as they did. Then he took them into a desolate place to rest, but the multitudes followed. After that the book tells how he fed five thousand men with only five loaves and two fishes.

A certain lawyer stood up testing him, saying, **“Teacher, having done what, would I inherit eternal life?”** (Luke 10:25). Jesus asked him what was written in the law. He said to love the Lord from thy whole heart, soul, strength, and mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. Jesus said he answered correctly. But wanting to justify himself, he asked who was his neighbor.

In response, Jesus told a parable about a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. He encountered bandits, who stripped him, beat him, and left him half dead. By coincidence a certain priest

saw him, but passed by. Likewise a Levite. However, a certain Samaritan felt compassion when he saw him, carried him to an inn, and took care of him. When he departed, he also gave the innkeeper money to care for him, promising to repay if it took more. Jesus then asked which of the three became neighbor to the man. When the lawyer replied it was he who did mercy to him, Jesus told him to go and do likewise.

When he was in a certain place praying, one of his disciples asked him to teach them to pray as John taught his disciples. Jesus said to them, **“When ye pray, say, Our Father in the heavens, hallowed be thy name. May thy kingdom come, may thy will happen on the earth as also in heaven. Give us our bread sufficient for each day. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive every man who is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”** (Luke 11:2-4).

Then he gave some lessons about making requests in prayer. After giving an example of how we give to each other when urged, he said, **“And I say to you, ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and ye will find. Knock, and it will be opened. For every man who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened”** (Luke 11:9-10). He also told how fathers give good things to their sons. And he said how much more the Father from heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

A certain Pharisee invited him to dine with him. When he sat down, the Pharisee marveled that he did not first wash before dinner. But Jesus said to him, **“Now ye Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your interior is full of plundering and wickedness”** (Luke 11:39). He called them foolish men. He said to give compassion, things that are within, and all things were clean to them. Then he uttered three woes to the Pharisees. He said they were strict about tithing, but passed by justice and the love of God. He rebuked them for loving places of honor and greetings in the marketplaces. He called them hypocrites, like unseen sepulchers that men walk over unawares.

Then he told them a parable about a rich man who had to build greater barns to store all his grain. Afterward the man planned to take his ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God called him a fool, because his soul was demanded that very night. And Jesus said, **“So is he who stores up for himself, and is not being rich toward God”** (Luke 12:21). And he taught his disciples not to be anxious

about their needs. He told them to make treasures in heaven that would never fail. He said, **“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”** (Luke 12:34).

He was teaching in one of their synagogues on the sabbath day. There was also a woman who had been bent over, unable to straighten up, for eighteen years. After he healed her, the synagogue ruler criticized the multitude. He told them to come on the six work days to be healed, and not on the sabbath. What did he care about that poor woman?

But Jesus called him a hypocrite, because they all loosed their livestock from their stalls to give drink on the sabbath. And he said, **“And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound, lo, eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?”** (Luke 13:16). The book says all those opposing him were shamed. And all the multitude rejoiced for the glorious things that were done by him.

While many multitudes went with him, he turned, and said to them, **“If any man comes to me, and does not regard as inferior his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, and besides his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross, and come behind me, cannot be my disciple”** (Luke 14:26-27). And he gave examples about planning ahead so as to succeed in a venture.

When all the tax collectors and sinners approached Jesus to hear him, the Pharisees and scholars murmured against him. Therefore, he told a parable about a prodigal son. He said a man had two sons, and the younger wanted his portion of goods. A few days later he took everything, went to a distant country, and squandered his wealth in reckless living. A mighty famine developed, and he had to work for someone else. He was sent to feed swine, and even longed to eat their food. However, he came to himself, and remembered how well his father’s hired men ate. So he said, **“After rising, I will go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. I am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired men”** (Luke 15:18-19).

When his father saw him from a distance, he ran, fell on his neck, and kissed him much. His son said he was not worthy to be called his son. However, his father told his bondmen to bring the best robe, give a ring for his hand, and shoes for his feet. He also

told them to prepare the fatted calf for them to eat. And they began to be cheerful. However, his elder son was in a field, and when he heard music and dancing, he asked about it. After he was told, he would not go in. Therefore, his father went out to persuade him. Yet he was resentful, saying he had always been obedient, yet had never received special treatment. His father said all that he had was his, **“But it was needful to make merry and be glad, because this thy brother was dead, and became alive again, and was lost, and was found”** (Luke 15:32).

Next the book tells about a rich ruler who was unwilling to give up his riches to follow Jesus. After that he healed a blind man. Then the book tells of his procession into Jerusalem, and how he cast out the merchants in the temple. The chief priests and the scholars sought to destroy him, even the foremost men of the people. However, they did not know how, because all the people hung upon him, listening.

Jesus told a parable to them about a man who leased a vineyard to farmers. The farmers proved themselves to be wicked men, even killing the man’s son. Jesus’ enemies wanted to arrest him, because they knew he spoke the parable against them, but they were afraid. Then both the Pharisees and the Sadducees sent men to trap him with words and hard questions. But they could never defeat his answers. They even became fearful of trying.

Later he spoke to his disciples about the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world. Then the book says the feast of unleavened bread, called Passover, was coming. And the chief priests and scholars sought how to kill him, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, and he went and talked with them about betraying Jesus. They were glad and gave him silver.

During the Passover supper with his disciples Jesus told of his betrayal by a man who was with him at the table. And they questioned each other who would do such a thing. After that they went as usual to the mount of Olives. He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw distance. Then he knelt and prayed. He asked his Father to remove the cup (his crucifixion) from him. However, he also said, **“Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done”** (Luke 22:42). The book says an agent from heaven appeared, strengthening him. Yet he became in agony, and prayed more intensely, with his sweat falling like drops of blood. After rising from prayer, he returned and found his disciples sleeping from sorrow. He told them

to rise, and pray they may not enter into temptation.

While he spoke, Judas came with a multitude and kissed him. Jesus said to him, “**Judas, thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?**” (Luke 22:48). They seized him, and brought him to the high priest’s house. The men who held Jesus mocked him, struck him, and railed against him. The next morning the eldership of the people, the chief priests, and the scholars, led him into their council. And they asked him if he was the Christ. After he said he was, they led him to Pilate.

However, Pilate wanted to release Jesus. He had to release one man at every feast, but they all cried out to release Barabbas, a rebel and a murderer. So because they were relentless with loud voices, he gave them their request. When they led Jesus away, a great multitude followed.

Jesus was crucified between two malefactors at a place called Skull. He asked his Father to forgive them, because they knew not what they were doing. The rulers and the soldiers mocked him. The inscription over him was in Greek and Latin and Hebrew, and read, “**THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS**” (Luke 23:38). One of the malefactors railed at him for not saving himself and them, but the other one rebuked him. He said they deserved their punishment, but he did nothing wrong. Then he asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Jesus replied, “**Truly I say to thee, today thou will be with me in the paradise**” (Luke 23:43).

Beginning with the sixth hour (noon) darkness occurred over the whole land for three hours. Also the curtain of the temple was torn in the middle. Finally, Jesus spoke in a great voice, “**Father, into thy hands I entrust my spirit**” (Luke 23:46), and then he expired. All the multitudes turned back, beating their breasts.

Then a righteous man named Joseph came. He was a council member who had not consented to what they did. After requesting his body, he laid it in a new and unused sepulcher cut in rock. The women followed closely, and saw how the body was laid. Then they returned, prepared spices and ointments, and rested on the sabbath according to the commandment.

Very early on the first day of the week, the women came to the sepulcher with the spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away, but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were bewildered, two men stood near them in shining apparel. They became frightened, and bowed their face to the ground. They

reminded the women how he said he would be crucified, and the third day rise. So the women returned to report all those things to the eleven, and all the others. The women who told those things were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and others. However, their words appeared to the others as idle talk, and they did not believe.

Later Jesus appeared and spoke with two of his disciples on their way to a village from Jerusalem. However, they did not recognize him. When they finally did Jesus disappeared from them. Then they returned to the eleven in Jerusalem, and reported what happened. As they spoke Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said, **“Peace to you”** (Luke 24:36). They became frightened, and thought they saw a spirit. But he reassured them, and showed them his hands and feet. And he asked for something to eat, perhaps as further proof that it was he in the flesh.

Then he taught them from the Old Testament scriptures that spoke about him and his suffering. He said they were witnesses to those things. And he told them to stay in the city until they were clothed with power from on high. Then, after leading them outside as far as Bethany, he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And while he blessed them he was brought up into heaven. Having worshiped him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.

## A Description of **John**

The contents of this book are very different from those of the other three biographies of Jesus: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There are no contradictions with them. However, many of the things it tells about Jesus are not in the other biographies. Its first words say, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** It says the Word was in the beginning with God, and all things came into being through him. It also says he was the light of men. He came into the world, to his own, but his own did not accept him. The book says, **“But as many as did accept him, to them he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name”** (John 1:12).

The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to John (the immerser) to ask who he was. John confessed he was not the Christ. He told them that Jesus was the Son of God. Two of John’s disci-

ples then began following Jesus. When Jesus saw it, he invited them to where he dwelt. One of them was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He told Simon they had found the Messiah. When they brought him to Jesus, he said he would be called Cephas, which is interpreted, Peter.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. That family must not have had much money, because they ran out of wine. So, at his mother's request, Jesus helped them by created wine from water. After that he went up to Jerusalem at the Passover. While there he drove out the merchants from the temple.

Next the book tells about a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night, and said he knew that Jesus was a teacher from God. Jesus then told him that if a man is not begotten from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus wanted to know how a man could be reborn of his mother. Jesus then said, **"Truly, truly, I say to thee, If any man is not begotten from water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"** (John 3:5). Then he contrasted flesh with spirit. He said wind can be heard but not seen, and so it was with a man begotten from the Spirit.

Nicodemus still wondered how it could happen. So Jesus said, **"Thou are the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?"** (John 3:10). Then he spoke of faith in him, and said the beautiful and oft-quoted words, **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, so that every man who believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life"** (John 3:16). However, Jesus condemned unbelievers, saying their deeds were evil, and they loved darkness rather than light.

While Jesus was going to Galilee, he had to pass through Samaria. He came near a city there, and being weary from the journey he was sitting on the well alone. His disciples had gone to the city to buy food. A woman of Samaria came to draw water, and Jesus asked her to give him some. Jesus told her about living water. When she asked for it, he told her to go call her husband. She said she had no husband. Jesus said she spoke correctly, for she had five husbands, and he whom she had then was not her husband. When she heard that, she said he was a prophet. She spoke of how they worshiped differently from the Jews, but he said that was changing. The woman said she knew Messiah, called Christ, was coming, and he would declare all things to them. Jesus said, **"I who speak to thee am the man"** (John 4:26).

When his disciples came, the woman left her water pot, and went to the men of the city. She told them to come and see a man who told her as many things as she did. So they went and came to him. The book says that many of the Samaritans from that city believed in him. First because of the woman's testimony, then because they heard him themselves.

Sometime later Jesus went to the other side of the sea of Galilee. He was followed by a great multitude, because they saw his signs on those who were infirmed. There were about five thousand men, and he fed them with five barley loaves and two fishes. When the men saw what he did, they wanted to seize him to make him king. However, he departed onto the mountain alone. At evening his disciples were in the boat going to the other side toward Capernaum. It was dark, and a great wind was blowing. When they saw Jesus walking on the sea to them, they were afraid. But he said, **"It is I, fear not"** (John 6:20).

The next day the multitude entered boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. When they found him, they asked how he got there. However, he said to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, ye seek me not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled"** (John 6:26). He told them to labor for the food that endures to eternal life. When they asked for it, he answered, **"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will, no, not hunger, and he who believes in me will, no, not ever thirst"** (John 6:35). He said he came to do the will of the Father, and he would give eternal life to all who believe in him. And he said the bread he would give was his flesh.

That caused the Jews to contend with each other. They wanted to know how he could give them his flesh to eat. Therefore, many of his disciples said, **"This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?"** (John 6:60). So Jesus explained. He said, **"It is the spirit that makes alive. The flesh benefits nothing. The sayings that I speak to you are spirit, are life"** (John 6:63). The book says Jesus knew from the beginning who would not believe, and who would betray him.

Many of his disciples went back at those things, and no longer walked with him. Jesus asked the twelve if they also wanted to go. Peter answered him, **"Lord, to whom will we go? Thou have sayings of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God"** (John 6:68-69).

After that Jesus walked in Galilee instead of Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. Then he went to the Jew's feast of tabernacles. And he went into the temple and taught. They wanted to know how he was so learned. He told them it was not his doctrine, but his who sent him. And he said, **"If any man wants to do his will, he will know about the doctrine, whether it is from God, or I speak from myself"** (John 7:17). Many from the crowd believed in him, being impressed by the many signs he did.

Jesus went to the mount of Olives, and returned at early morning. All the people came to him, and he sat and taught them. Then the scholars and Pharisees brought him a woman taking in adultery. They stood her in the midst to tempt him. They reminded him of Moses law to stone such, but wanted to know what he said about her. They wanted an accusation against him. The Romans did not allow them to execute anybody. He said to them, **"Let the innocent man of you first cast the stone at her"** (John 8:7). When they heard that they all left. Apparently they were all hypocrites who themselves were guilty of adultery, but had just not been caught. When Jesus asked the woman if no man condemned her, she said no man. Then he said, **"Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and henceforth sin no more"** (John 8:11).

When Jesus left the temple he healed a man who was born blind. Later they brought the man to the Pharisees. They kept asking him how he received his sight, and he finally asked them if they wanted to become his disciples. They reviled him, and said they were disciples of Moses. They said they knew God had spoken to Moses, but they knew nothing about that man. The man said that was amazing. He said it had never been heard that any man opened the eyes of a man born blind (and it never will be, because the brain needs to learn to recognize anything). He said if that man were not from God, he could do nothing. The Pharisees said to him, **"Thou were born entirely in sins, and thou teach us"** (John 9:34). And they cast him out.

When Jesus heard it, he found him and asked if he believed in the Son of God. When the man learned that was Jesus, he said, **"Lord, I believe"** (John 9:38), and he worshiped him. Then Jesus said, **"For judgment I came into this world, so that those not seeing might see, and those who see might become blind"** (John 9:39). Jesus also referred to his disciples as sheep, and himself as the good shepherd. He said, **"And I lay down my life for the sheep"** (John 10:14-15).

Sometime afterward Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. He was the brother of two women named Mary and Martha. He had died three days before of a sickness. Therefore many of the Jews who saw it believed in him. However, some went and reported to the Pharisees. The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council to plot how to kill him. And Jesus would no longer walk openly among the Jews.

The book says that Jesus loved his own in the world, and he loved them to the end. During the Passover supper he became troubled in the spirit, and said one of them would betray him. The disciples did not know about whom he spoke. The author of this book (John) said that Peter gestured to him to inquire of Jesus. Jesus said it was the man to whom he would give a morsel. And he gave it to Judas Iscariot. Then Satan entered into Judas, and Jesus told him to do what he did quickly. So he went out into the night.

Then Jesus said that where he was going they could not come. And he said, **“A new commandment I give to you, that ye should love each other, just as I loved you, so that ye also should love each other. By this all men will know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love among each other”** (John 13:34-35). Peter asked him where he was going, and wanted to know why he could not follow him. He said he would lay down his life for him. Jesus asked him if he really would, for a cock would not sound until he denied him thrice.

Then he spoke words of great comfort to them. He said, **“Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me”** (John 14:1). He told them of many dwellings in his Father’s house, and said he goes to prepare a place for them. And he said, **“He who has my commandments, and keeps them, that man it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him”** (John 14:21).

He said he loved them as the Father loves him, and if they keep his commandments, they would dwell in his love. He said, **“These things I have spoken to you that my joy may dwell in you, and your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that ye love each other, just as I have loved you”** (John 15:11-12). He said there was no greater love than for a man to lay down his life for his friends. And he said he no longer called them bondmen, but friends.

He said if the world hates them, know that it hated him before

them. He said the world loves its own, but they are not of the world. And that is why the world hates them. He said, “**He who hates me hates my Father also**” (John 15:23). And he said the hour was coming when every man who killed them would presume to be offering service to God. He said he spoke to them so they might have peace in him. He said they have tribulation in the world, but to cheer up, he had overcome the world.

Then he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and spoke a lengthy prayer in their presence. He said the hour had come, and he asked his Father to glorify him, so that he could glorify him. He told how he had been given authority over all flesh, and he spoke of eternal life. He said he was praying about his disciples, but not about the world. He asked him to keep them in his name, so that they may be one, just as he and the Father were one. He told the Father he wanted them to be where he was (in heaven), so they could see his glory. The glory he had before the world was made.

After that Jesus went with his disciples to a garden. Judas, the betrayer, knew where it was because Jesus often gathered there with his disciples. He therefore came with a band from the chief priests and the Pharisees, having lanterns and torches and weapons. They arrested Jesus, bound him, and led him away.

Peter and the other disciple (John) followed Jesus. And they went in with Jesus into the courtyard. On three occasions Peter was asked if he was not also one of his disciples. He said no each time, then a cock sounded.

The Jews took Jesus to Pilate the Roman governor because it was not permitted them to kill any man. After examining Jesus, Pilate told the Jews he found no cause of death in him. However, he reminded them of the custom to release one man at the Passover. They all cried out for Barabbas instead of Jesus. Barabbas was a robber. And they kept demanding it until he delivered Jesus to be crucified.

Jesus went out bearing his cross to a place called “of a Skull,” and in Hebrew, “Golgotha.” They crucified him between two other men. Pilate wrote a title to be put on the cross: “**JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS**” (John 19:19). After he died Joseph of Arimathaea, a secret disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate for his body. And he placed it in a new unused sepulcher.

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early, while still dark, and saw how the stone was taken from the sepulcher.

Therefore, she ran to Peter and the other disciple (John). And she told them they had taken away the Lord, and they did not know where. So the two men ran together to see. They saw the linen clothes lying, and then departed. However, as Mary stood outside the sepulcher weeping, Jesus appeared to her. He told her not to touch him, but go tell his brothers, **“I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God”** (John 20:17).

At evening that day, the first day of the week, the disciples were assembled with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. Jesus stood in the midst, and said, **“Peace to you”** (John 20:19). After showing them his hands and side, they rejoiced. He therefore said to them again, **“Peace to you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you”** (John 20:21). Then he breathed on them, and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. Thomas was not there, and he doubted they saw Jesus. But later he appeared to them when Thomas was there, and he recognized him. Then Jesus said, **“Because thou have seen me, thou have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and have believed”** (John 20:29).

The book then says, **“And indeed therefore many other signs Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, so that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name”** (John 20:30-31).

After those things Jesus appeared to them at the sea of Tiberias (Galilee). Seven of them had been in a boat fishing with a net all night. That morning Jesus invited them to eat the breakfast he had prepared for them on the shore. After they ate, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. Each time Peter said he did, and each time Jesus told him to feed his sheep. After the third time, Peter was grieved, and said, **“Lord, thou know all things. Thou know that I love thee”** (John 21:17). Peter no longer disputed with Jesus. The humiliation of his denials apparently humbled him, and made him a better man.

After that Jesus described to Peter what kind of death he would glorify God. His hands would be stretched out, and he would be carried where he did not want. That meant he also would be crucified. When Peter asked Jesus about John. He said to him, **“If I want him to remain until I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou me”** (John 21:22). John said that saying went forth among the brothers that he would not die, but he said Jesus did not say that.

John concluded the book with these words: **“This is the disciple who testifies about these things, and who wrote these things. And we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things, as many as Jesus did, which if they would be written every one, I suppose not even the world itself to make room for the books being written. Truly.”**

### A Description of **Acts**

This is a continuation of the book of Luke. It addresses Theophilus, and refers to the former treatise, which was Luke’s story of Jesus. It says that Jesus presented himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs. And he had been seen by the apostles during forty days.

When they were assembled together, Jesus commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem. He told them to wait for the promise of the Father, meaning the Holy Spirit. He said they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and they would be witnesses to him **“both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and as far as of the extremity of the earth”** (Acts 1:8). After saying those things, he was taken up and received in a cloud.

Then they returned to Jerusalem. When they were gathered together on the day of Pentecost a sound came from the sky as a forceful wind. The book says, **“And there appeared to them dividing tongues, as of fire, and they settled upon each one of them. And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them to declare”** (Acts 2:3-4). Other tongues means other languages.

Being a feast day, there were many devout Jews from every nation there. The multitude came together at the sound, and was bewildered because each one heard them speaking in his own language. The book names fifteen nations from where they came. They were amazed and wondered.

Then Peter stood up with the eleven, and spoke out to them. He preached to them about Jesus. He used their own eyewitness testimony, and some Old Testament scriptures, to verify he is the Christ. He concluded by saying, **“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made him, this Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ”** (Acts 2:36).

The book says when they heard that, they were pierced in the

heart. And they asked Peter and the other apostles what they could do. Peter told them to repent and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ. The book says he testified and exhorted them with many other words. He told them to be saved from that crooked generation. It says three thousand souls were added to the church that day. Many wonders and signs occurred through the apostles. And all who believed were together, sharing the things they possessed. The book says the Lord added to the church daily those being saved.

Next it tells about Peter healing a man who was lame from his mother's belly. He was lying at the temple gate called Beautiful. He had been carried there to ask charity. Peter told him, **"No silver and gold exists to me, but what I have, this I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk"** (Acts 3:6). The book says, **"And leaping up, he stood and walked. And he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God"** (Acts 3:8).

Of course, the people were astonished when they recognized him, and they ran together. Peter then asked them why they marveled at the man, or stared at them as if it was by their power they made him walk. Then he preached about Jesus to them. As they spoke, however, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came. They were greatly annoyed because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. So they put them in custody until the morrow. The book says, **"But many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of the men became about five thousand"** (Acts 4:4).

The next day many leaders of the Jews assembled in Jerusalem. When questioned, Peter said if they asked about the man who was healed, it was done in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom they crucified, but God raised from the dead. He said, **"And salvation is not in any other man, for there is no other name under the heaven, that has been given among men, by which we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).

The book says they marveled when they saw the boldness of Peter and John. But they could not contradict what they had done. They decided to threaten them, and order them not to teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John said they were going to speak what they saw and heard. The rulers further threatened them and let them go.

The book says many signs and wonders happened among the

people at the hands of the apostles. It says, **“And more who believe were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so as to bring the feeble to the thoroughfares, and to place them on cots and mats, so that while coming, the shadow of Peter might at the least overshadow some of them”** (Acts 5:14-15).

However, the high priest and all those with him (the Sadducees) were filled with envy, and they arrested the apostles. They beat them, and commanded them to keep quiet about Jesus. Then they released them. When they departed they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to be treated shamefully for the name of Jesus. And they continued every day in the temple, and from house to house, teaching and preaching the good-news of Christ.

The book next tells about the death of Stephen. He was doing great wonders and signs among the people, but some of the Jews rose up disputing with him. However, they were not able to withstand the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke. So they instigated men to make false charges, saying he spoke blasphemy against Moses and God. They incited the people, the elders, and the scholars. Hence, they arrested him, and brought him to the council.

When he was asked about the charges, he started reviewing their history, beginning with Abraham their founding father. He reminded them how Joseph and Moses had been persecuted by their ancestors. And he told how the house of Israel forsook God for idols.

He ended his review, saying to them, **“Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers, ye also. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold about the coming of the Righteous man, of whom ye now have become betrayers and murderers, who received the law at directions of agents, and did not keep it”** (Acts 7:51-53).

The book says when they heard those things, they were split with a saw in their hearts, and gnashed their teeth against him. And they took him out of the city and stoned him. I suspect most people who now call themselves Christians would accuse anybody who spoke the way Stephen did of speaking too harshly. However, God honored him in a special way by allowing Stephen to see him in heaven just before he died.

The effect of Stephen’s trial began a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem. The cause was not Stephen’s testimony,

but the hatred of the Jews toward God's word. Hence, the disciples were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. The book says a young man named Saul was ravaging the church. He was dragging both men and women from their houses, and giving them over to prison. Nevertheless, those who were scattered abroad proclaimed the good-news.

Saul even went to the high priest, and requested letters to the synagogues in Damascus. He wanted to bind, and bring back, any there who were of the Way (meaning disciples of Christ). As he approached Damascus, suddenly a light out of heaven shown around him. After falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, **"Saul, Saul, why do thou persecute me?"** (Acts 9:4). When Saul asked who he was, he said he was Jesus whom he was persecuting. And he told him to go into the city, and he would be told what to do.

Saul could not see after that, so they led him into Damascus. He was three days not seeing, and he neither ate nor drank. Then the Lord sent a man named Ananias who restored his vision and told him to immerse (to put on Christ). After receiving nourishment he began to proclaim the Christ in the synagogues. All who heard were amazed, because they knew about him. He confounded the Jews there, proving that Jesus is the Christ. Consequently, after considerable days they plotted to destroy him. However, the disciples let him down through the wall in a hamper by night and he escaped.

After that the book tells about the conversion of the first Gentile. His name was Cornelius, a centurion. An agent from heaven told him to send for Peter. And while he sent for him God used a vision to prepare Peter. The vision commanded him to eat unclean animals. When Peter protested, the voice from heaven said, **"What God has cleansed, thou shall not make profane"** (Acts 10:15).

After the men came, the Spirit told Peter to go with them because he had sent them. The following day he and some other disciples came to Cornelius. And he said to him, **"In truth, I am overwhelmed that God is not partial, but in every nation, he who fears him, and works righteousness, is acceptable to him"** (Acts 10:34-35). Then he told him about the good-news of Jesus Christ, and how they witnessed his resurrection. The book says that while Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word. Therefore, Peter immersed them to become disciples of Christ.

The apostles and the brothers in Judea heard that the Gentiles also received the word of God. And when Peter returned to Jerusalem, some criticized him for fraternizing with Gentiles. When Peter described all that happened they accepted it and glorified God.

Saul and another disciple named Barnabas had been with the congregation in Antioch for a whole year. Then the Holy Spirit said, **“Separate to me now Barnabas and Saul for the work that I have called them”** (Acts 13:2). Therefore, having fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. They sailed to Cyprus, and proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews there. They also had John (John Mark) for a helper. It is here that the book begins to call Saul by the name of Paul.

After a while those around Paul sailed with him to Perga in Pamphylia, but John departed for Jerusalem. Paul and the others went to several cities. They would first enter into the synagogue of the city on the sabbath day. Then they would preach Jesus. Often many would believe, including Gentile proselytes. However, almost always some of the Jews would become envious and oppose them. They would contradict what Paul said, and would slander them. They would also stir up persecution against them. In one city they even stoned Paul and left him for dead, but he recovered. Usually they would have to flee to other cities, but not until they had established a congregation (church) in the city. Most of those new Christians were Gentiles.

After establishing congregations in various cities they decided to return to the ones where they had been. They preached and strengthened the souls of the disciples. And they told them it was necessary for us to enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations. They also appointed elders for them in every congregation. Then they returned to Antioch from where they began. And after arriving they reported to the congregation as many things as God did with them.

After some days Paul suggested to Barnabas they return again to help their brothers in every city they had been. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark again. However, Paul objected because he withdrew the first time. So they separated from each other, and Paul selected a disciple named Silas to go with him.

Paul passed through Syria and Cilicia, encouraging the congregations. In one city he met a young man named Timothy whom he took with him. Paul went to Philippi, the principle city of Mace-

donia, and they were there for some days. They met a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple. And the Lord opened her heart to heed what Paul said. When she and her household were immersed, she urged them to come and stay with her. So they went.

A time came, as they were going to prayer, when a certain servant girl who had a spirit of divination met them. She had brought her masters much business by soothsaying. She followed Paul and the others, saying, **“These men are bondmen of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation”** (Acts 16:17). Since she did this on many days, Paul became exasperated. He commanded the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. When it did, her masters, seeing the hope of their business was gone, seized Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace to the rulers. After charging them with disturbing their city, they were beaten with rods and cast into prison. The jailer was ordered to guard them securely. Therefore, he threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Toward midnight Paul and Silas, while praying, were singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly a great earthquake shook the foundations of the prison. All the doors were opened, and the bonds of all the men were unfastened. When the jailer saw it he thought all the prisoners had escaped. So he was going to kill himself with his sword. But Paul cried out they were all there. The jailer called for lights, rushed in trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas.

After bringing them out, he asked what he should do to be saved. Paul said, **“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou will be saved, thou and thy household”** (Acts 16:31). The same hour he washed from their stripes, and was immersed, he and all of his. Then he brought them into his house, fed them, and rejoiced, having believed in God with all his house. When it became day the magistrates released them, and asked them to depart the city. After going to Lydia, they saw the brothers, encouraged them, and then left the city.

They came to Thessalonica and preached. As usual, some believed, but the disobedient Jews caused a riot. So the brothers straightaway sent Paul and Silas by night to Berea. And when they arrived they went to the synagogue of the Jews. The book says, **“But these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all willingness, examining the Scriptures daily, if it has these things this way”** (Acts 17:11). Therefore,

many of them believed. However, the Jews of Thessalonica heard about it. So they came and agitated the crowds against them. The brothers straightaway sent Paul to the sea, while Silas and Timothy remained there.

They brought Paul as far as Athens, and departed with his command that Silas and Timothy come quickly. While Paul was waiting for them, his spirit was aroused within him, seeing the city was completely idolatrous. He discoursed with the Jews in the synagogue, and with those who worship, and in the marketplace every day with the passersby. He was also invited to preach at the Areopagus, which was a public forum. When he mentioned the resurrection of the dead during his speech some mocked. However, others said they wanted to hear him again about those things.

Later Paul went to Corinth, where he found a Jew named Aquila, whose wife was Priscilla. They were of the same craft, being tent-makers, so he abode with them and worked. He also discoursed in the synagogues every sabbath, and was persuading Jews and Greeks about Jesus Christ. Silas and Timothy also came down from Macedonia. When those of the synagogue began to oppose and slander him, he shook out his clothes, and said, **“Your blood is upon your heads. I am clean. From henceforth I will go to the Gentiles”** (Acts 18:6).

Paul came to Ephesus, and as usual he spoke boldly in the synagogue. However, after about three months some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way. Therefore, he separated the disciples, and discoursed daily in the school of Tyrannus. The book says that lasted two years, so that all those in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus. It also says that God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul. They even brought handkerchiefs or aprons from his skin to the infirmed and the demon possessed, and they were restored.

However, there were some wandering Jewish exorcists who attempted to use the name of Jesus over those who had evil spirits. They said, **“We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul proclaims”** (Acts 19:13). Seven sons of a Jewish chief priest were doing it. However, the evil spirit said, **“I know Jesus and I recognize Paul, but who are ye?”** (Acts 19:15). Then the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped upon them and overpowered them. So they fled out of the house naked and wounded. That became known to all those at Ephesus. Therefore, fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

The record also says that a considerable number of those who had practiced magical things, brought their books, and burned them in the sight of all. The price of them was fifty thousand pieces of silver. Scoffers and unbelievers condemn book burning. Yet some books are so full of garbage and poison they need to be destroyed. Lovers of evil condemn all book burning.

The book says the word of the Lord was growing mightily and was prevailing. However, a silversmith named Demetrius stirred up a riot against Paul. He claimed his livelihood was threatened because he made idols, and Paul taught they were not gods. Paul was not caught in the riot, but he departed soon after that. The record then describes their travels to several cities as Paul journeyed to Jerusalem. When Paul arrived there he met with James and all the elders. And he reported to them what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. They rejoiced and then advised Paul how to assure everybody he was a faithful citizen of Israel. They told him to go to the temple and help some men worship there. However, after seven days he was recognized by some Jews from Asia. They stirred up a riot, and were about to kill Paul, but he was rescued by the Roman soldiers.

Paul asked the chief captain if he could speak to the people. Paul explained to the crowd who he was, and how he had earlier persecuted the Way. He told them how Jesus spoke to him in a vision on the road to Damascus. He also told them of a time he was praying in the temple, and he saw a vision of Jesus who told him to go to the Gentiles. They listened until they heard that, then they shouted, **“Away with such a man from the earth, for he is not fit to live”** (Acts 22:22). Most Jews of that time hated Gentiles.

The following day, the chief captain commanded the chief priests and all their council to come. However, during the hearing the Pharisees and the Sadducees began fighting with each other about their beliefs. The following night the Lord stood by Paul, and said, **“Cheer up, Paul, for as thou have testified these things about me at Jerusalem, so thou must testify also at Rome”** (Acts 23:11). In the morning forty men of the Jews made a conspiracy. They put themselves under a curse to taste of nothing until they had killed Paul. However the son of Paul’s sister heard about it. When the chief captain was informed, he ordered a large group of soldiers be assembled to escort Paul to Felix the governor at Caesarea. Caesarea was a city built by Herod for the Romans, and was located on

the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. He also sent a letter to Felix explaining the situation.

Felix also wanted to hear his accusers. So they had another trial. However, after the trial Felix delayed making a decision. And after two years Felix was replaced by Festus. He also conducted a trial. And when Festus asked Paul if he would go and be judged in Jerusalem, Paul said to him, **“I did nothing wrong Jewish, as thou also very well know”** (Acts 25:10). Then he appealed Caesar. Paul held Roman citizenship, so he had special rights.

However, Paul was tried again in Caesarea. Festus had invited king Agrippa to hear him. When the time came, the book says Agrippa and Bernice (his wife) came with great pomp, and entered into the courtroom with the chief captains and prominent men of the city.

While Paul made his defense, Festus said in a loud voice that he was mad. He said much scholarship was driving him into madness. Paul said he was not mad, but spoke sayings of truth and soberness, which the king knew about. Then Agrippa said, **“By a little thou persuade me to become a Christian”** (Acts 26:28). Paul said he ever prayed to God, for all who heard him that day to become such kind as he was, except for the bonds. So the king arose and told Festus that Paul could have been released if he had not appealed Caesar.

Paul was delivered with some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, and they got on a ship going to Asia. On the way they were caught in a fierce storm that lasted two weeks, and the book describes their ordeal. When they finally arrived at Rome the centurion allowed Paul to dwell by himself with a soldier who guarded him.

Three days later Paul called together the principle men of the Jews. Some were convinced, and some disbelieved, so there was discord among them. Therefore, Paul told them the Holy Spirit spoke accurately about them when he spoke through Isaiah: **“Go thou to this people, and say, Hearing ye will hear, and will, no, not understand, and seeing ye will see, and will, no, not perceive. For this people’s heart was made fat, and they hear heavily with the ears. And they shut their eyes, lest they may perceive with the eyes, and hear with the ears, and understand with the heart, and should turn, and I would heal them”** (Acts 28:26-27).

He told them that the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles, and they would hear. Then they departed. The book concludes, saying Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired lodging. And he preached the kingdom of God, and the things about the Lord Jesus with all boldness to all who came to him.

## A Description of **Romans**

Paul said he was a bondman of Jesus Christ, and a called apostle. And he addressed the letter to the called of Jesus Christ in Rome. He thanked God through Jesus Christ for them all, that their faith was proclaimed in the whole world. He said he mentioned them unceasingly in his prayers. Paul said he was not ashamed of the good-news of Christ, because it is the power of God for salvation to every man who believes.

Then he told how the wrath of God was revealed against all irreverence and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth. He said what is knowable of God is apparent, **“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things made, both his eternal power and divinity, for them to be without excuse”** (Romans 1:20). He said such men changed the truth of God into a lie, worshipping and serving the creation, rather than him who created it. Men now praise an imaginary force they call evolution for creating them.

Paul said God therefore gave them up to shameful passions like homosexuality. He said since they did not approve having God in their knowledge, God gave them over to an unfit mind, to do things that were not fit, such as greed, murder, slander, arrogant boasting. Modern scientists have excluded God from their knowledge, and any mention of him in our schools is illegal. Therefore, homosexuality and other kinds of harmful and unfit behavior are spreading. Paul warned that God was going to render to each man according to his works, **“For there is no partiality with God”** (Romans 2:11).

Then Paul gave reasons for the superiority of faith over a legal system. He said nobody can obey a legal system perfectly. Therefore, everybody becomes guilty. And guilt before God means condemnation and punishment. Remember, all it took was one act of disobedience by Adam to condemn him. Do you think your body will not age and die like Adam’s? Since we cannot save ourselves, we can only be saved by the kindness of God (his grace). And he

will only save those who have faith in him. However, Paul also said, **“Do we then make law void through faith? May it not happen! Instead, we establish law”** (Romans 3:31). He did not mean establish a legal system. He meant faith in God makes us want to be good (lawful).

Paul then used Abraham as an example. He showed how Abraham was made righteous by faith. And because of his faith God gave him a promise that he and his seed would be heirs of the world. What Paul taught was that everybody who has faith in God will eventually inherit heaven and earth. For everybody who has faith is a spiritual seed (descendent) of Abraham. It is not our flesh that matters, it is our spirit.

And it is by God’s grace that we become joint-heirs with Christ. For Paul said it was through Jesus Christ that we have access by faith to this grace, **“and we take pride in hope of the glory of God”** (Romans 5:2). He said we also take pride in our tribulations, for that produces perseverance, and that character, and that hope. And since character produces hope, it is obvious the faith Paul described is not simple belief. It is a dynamic faith, having trust that leads to obedience, just as Abraham had.

Then he contrasted our old sinful man with the new man of faith. He also said our old man was crucified with Christ. That means we are dead to sin. Paul said, **“So also ye, reckon yourselves to be indeed dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Romans 6:10-11). He said we should use the parts of our body as instruments of righteousness and not sin. And he said, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Romans 6:23).

Then Paul told of his own struggle against sin. By sin he meant anything wrong. It is a sin to cut or bruise yourself, but who can say he never will? Paul wanted to live perfectly, but he never could. It is the nature of this sinful body, which, like Paul, we all struggle with. Paul said, **“I am a wretched man. Who will rescue me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 7:24-25). As long as we have faith in God, and try to obey him, he will forgive our sins. But the sinner has no such promise.

Children of God try to live by the Spirit of God, even if we have to struggle with our body. But sinners live to indulge their body. What they want to do is live for pleasure. However, Paul warned

about that. He said, **“For the mentality of the flesh is death, but the mentality of the Spirit is life and peace”** (Romans 8:6). And he told how we can identify the true sons of God, for they will be led by the Spirit of God. In other words, they will live righteously.

Then Paul wrote great words of encouragement. He said if we were children of God, then we are joint-heirs with Christ, provided we suffer jointly. And he said, **“For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not comparable to the glory that is going to be revealed for us”** (Romans 8:18). He said this creation was made subject to futility, but will itself be freed from its bondage to corruption when the children of God are glorified. He said we and the whole creation groan together waiting for the redemption of our body. So the creation will not be annihilated, but will be transformed, perhaps something like smelted metal.

Paul said we were saved to hope, and therefore we wait with patience. Then he spoke these wonderful words of encouragement: **“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to purpose”** (Romans 8:28). Therefore, trust God and take comfort in those words when you wonder why some things happen.

Then he told how he grieved over his fellow Israelites, those who had been God’s chosen people. Paul said his heart’s desire and prayer to God was for the salvation of Israel. He said they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Paul also said that God had not completely rejected his people, for he was also an Israelite. Paul then said that the time was coming when Israel would be saved. But nobody knows when that will be.

Paul urged his brothers to present their bodies a living sacrifice. He said not to be conformed to this age, but be transformed in their minds. He compared their different gifts (abilities) to parts of the body of Christ. Then he gave a brief list of things right and wrong. And he spoke of loving our neighbor, which fulfills law.

Then he discouraged arguments about opinions, and used the example of the vegetarian. However, he also warned against causing a brother to stumble. He said the strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the frail, and do whatever is good for edification. Paul was probably speaking primarily about temporary restraints while the weak brother was learning, and not permanent limits to our liberty.

He encouraged them to persevere, and to be united together to

glorify God. He spoke of his ministry to the Gentiles. And he said he planned to see them in passing on his way to Spain. However, he was currently going to Jerusalem to serve the poor among the sanctified with a gift from the Gentiles. And he asked them to pray for his deliverance from the disobedient in Judea. The Jews were the most vicious of Paul's enemies.

Next Paul asked them to welcome and support Phoebe, a sister who became a helper of many, including himself. Then he asked them to salute several men and a few women, whom he named. They included Prisca and Aquila, whom he said laid down their own neck for his life. He ended that part, saying, **“Salute each other by a holy kiss. The congregations of Christ salute you”** (Romans 16:16).

He warned them to watch for those who made divisions and stumbling blocks, contrary to the doctrine they learned. He said such men use smooth words to deceive the hearts of the naïve. Paul said he wanted them to be wise in the good, and pure in the evil. Then he mentioned a few men who saluted them, including Timothy, and Tertius who said he wrote the letter (transcribed it). This and other evidence suggests Paul had poor vision. Paul concluded with praise to God.

### A Description of **First Corinthians**

This letter says it is from Paul and Sosthenes the brother to the congregation of God at Corinth. Sosthenes must have transcribed Paul's words here. Paul said he thanked his God always about them. He said the grace of God was given to them, so they came behind in not one gift. After more words of encouragement he urged them to be of the same mind, and not have divisions among themselves. People who say they believe in Christ have many different denominations, which are divisions. Paul said such divisions were wrong.

Then he contrasted the message of the cross of Christ with the wisdom of the world. He said the world thought it was foolishness. However, God made foolish the wisdom of this world. He said God chose the foolish things of the world to humiliate the wise, and the weak things to humiliate the powerful. Did you know that humble Christians conquered the Roman empire with only the word of God? Paul said no flesh could boast before God.

Paul told the Corinthians he did not come to them in eminence of

speech or of wisdom. However, he also said they spoke wisdom among the fully developed, **“but not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who come to nothing”** (1st Corinthians 2:6). He said they spoke a wisdom of God in a hidden mystery that was disclosed to them through his Spirit. However, Paul said he could not speak to them as to spiritual, but as to carnal, as to the childlike in Christ. He said their envy and strife and divisions showed they were carnal. He asked them what they had that they did not receive, so why did they boast.

Then he said, **“For I think God has exhibited us the apostles least”** (1st Corinthians 4:9). And he described the miseries and suffering they endured. He concluded that description with the words, **“We became as trash of the world, an offscouring of all things, until now”** (1st Corinthians 4:13).

Then he spoke to them as his beloved children, and he besought them to follow him. He said he was sending Timothy to remind them of his ways in Christ. Then he said he had heard about fornication among them. Some man had his father’s wife, and they were proud about it, not mournful. He told them to remove the man from among them. He told them to judge those inside the church, and let God judge the outsiders.

After that he rebuked them for having lawsuits against each other. He said they should settle such disputes among themselves. He warned them that the unrighteous would not inherit the kingdom of God. And he listed several kinds, such as idolaters, effeminate men, thieves, slanderers. He said some of them were those things, but they had been washed and sanctified in the name of Christ. He said they had been made righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

Then he told them to flee fornication. He said every sin was outside the body, but he who fornicates sins against his own body. Paul said their body was a temple of the Holy Spirit within them. Therefore, they should glorify God in their body and their spirit. This sinful generation encourages everybody to fornicate. They even ridicule virgins. But sinners will never get to heaven.

Then he wrote about marriage, and he gave some rules about it. He also gave his opinion about some things. After that he spoke about things sacrificed to idols. That was a problem Christians had in those days. Then he spoke about financial support for those who devote their lives to proclaim the good-news of Christ. He said the

Lord commanded them to be supported. Paul said, however, he chose to preach without charge. It was his personal decision, not a requirement. Paul was never married, and so he had no family to support.

He said there was no temptation that was not common to man, but God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able. He will make a way for us to escape. Then he praised them for remembering him in all things, and for keeping the traditions as he had delivered to them. Then he said, **“But I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ, and the head of a woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God”** (1st Corinthians 11:3). He also said it was wrong for a man to pray with his head covered. And it was wrong for a woman to pray without having her head covered.

Next Paul spoke of the divisions among them during the Lord’s Supper. Then he spoke of spiritual gifts. He said the Spirit gave different gifts to different men. And he named some, such as gifts of healing to one, workings of miracles to another, and prophecy to another. He said, **“But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each man individually as it wills”** (1st Corinthians 12:11).

He said as the body was one, having many parts, so also is the Christ. He said the foot could not say it was not of the body because it was not a hand. He asked if they were all one part, where would be the body? He even said the parts that seemed to be more feeble were necessary. He said, **“And if one part suffers, all the parts suffer together, or one part is honored, all the parts rejoice together”** (1st Corinthians 12:26). He told them they were the body of Christ, and body-parts individually.

Then he said, **“But be zealous for the better gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way”** (1st Corinthians 12:31). Then he gave a beautiful description of love—agape love. He said if he had great talents, but no love, he was nothing. He said if he made great sacrifices, but no love, it would benefit him nothing.

He described what love was like: **“Love is patient and is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not brag, and is not puffed up. It does not behave improperly, does not seek the things of itself, is not made sharp, does not contemplate evil, does not rejoice in wrong but rejoices in the truth, covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things”** (1st Corinthians 13:4-7).

He said all the gifts would cease, but love never fails. He said love was even greater than faith and hope. He told them to pursue love, but also be zealous for the spiritual things, especially prophecy. And he told how prophecy was better than speaking in tongues. Remember, speaking in tongues meant a man could speak a language he never learned. Paul said speaking in tongues was to encourage faith in the unbelieving. While prophecy was to help believers.

Dear reader, all of the spiritual gifts existing before the New Testament was written have long since passed away. No man on earth has such supernatural powers or ever will again. The meaningless gibberish now uttered that some claim is speaking in tongues is deluded foolishness. It is certainly not a sign to encourage faith in the unbelieving; instead, it discourages them. John said to examine the spirits, whether they are of God (see 1st John 4:1). Pursue truth not things fanciful.

Then Paul told them to have an orderly assembly. He said God was not of confusion, but of peace. He also told them that the women were to keep silent in the churches and be subordinate. He said if they wanted to learn anything, let them question their own husbands at home. He said it was an ugly thing for women to speak in an assembly.

Then he spoke about the resurrection of the dead. He said, **“If we are men who have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men more miserable”** (1st Corinthians 15:19). He said we would be given a different kind of body at the resurrection. He said, **“And just as we have worn the form of the earthly, we will also wear the form of the heavenly”** (1st Corinthians 15:49).

Finally, Paul expressed greetings from and to several others. And he ended the letter, saying, **“If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. Maranatha. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you. My love is with you all in Christ Jesus. Truly”** (1st Corinthians 16:22-24).

## A Description of Second Corinthians

This letter says it is from Paul and Timothy to the congregation at Corinth. Perhaps Timothy transcribed Paul's words this time. Paul praised God, the Father of Jesus Christ. He said he was the Father of mercies and the God of all encouragement. He said God encouraged them in all their affliction so that they could encourage others in affliction.

Then he told them about their severe affliction in Asia. They even thought they had the sentence of death. However, he said it was to show they could not trust in themselves, but in God. He spoke of their pride in them, and told of his plan to visit them again. He said he did not want to come in sadness, which was why he had written. He said, **“For out of much stress and dismay of heart, through many tears, I wrote to you, not that ye would be grieved, but that ye might know the love that I have so much more for you”** (2nd Corinthians 2:4).

Then he told them the punishment by the many was sufficient for such a man. And they should affirm their love for him (the man he rebuked for having his father's wife). He said he wrote to know the proof of them, whether they were obedient in all things. He said whom they forgive, he also forgives.

Paul said they were not as other men, huckstering the word of God. He said God made them (Paul and the others) qualified helpers of a new covenant. And he spoke of how the minds of the sons of Israel were hardened, unable to see even to that day. He said, **“But even if our good-news is concealed, it is concealed in those who are perishing, in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving”** (2nd Corinthians 4:3-4).

He spoke of their afflictions, but also of their faith. Therefore they were not discouraged. And he said, **“... even if the outer man of us is perishing, yet the inner man is renewed day by day. For our slight momentary affliction works for us an eternal weight of glory from extraordinariness to extraordinariness”** (2nd Corinthians 4:16-17). He said we long to clothe ourselves with our habitation from heaven. And he said each man would stand before the judgment-seat of the Christ.

He said God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. And he committed to them (Paul and the others) the word of reconciliation. Paul said they were therefore ambassadors on behalf of Christ,

as though God were calling through them. And he pleaded with them to be reconciled to God.

He told them not to become unequally yoked with unbelievers. He asked what partnership was light with darkness. He told of his great pride for them. Paul said he had been remorseful for grieving them in the (first) letter. But now he rejoiced that they had been grieved for repentance. And he told of the eagerness it worked in them to correct the matter.

Most of what remains in the letter is a defense Paul gave of his apostleship. He was accused of having weighty and powerful letters, but being weak in bodily presence, and having speech that was disdained. Paul said such a man (his accuser) should realize that what they were in word by letters when absent, they were also when present in the work.

Then he said, **“O that ye tolerated a little of my foolishness, but tolerate me too”** (2nd Corinthians 11:1). He said he was jealous of them with a jealousy of God. He indicated they were too tolerant of men who brought in other things. And he said, **“But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet not in knowledge”** (2nd Corinthians 11:5-6).

Then he exposed his competitors for what they were, saying, **“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for even Satan disguises himself into an agent of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his helpers also disguise themselves as helpers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works”** (2nd Corinthians 11:13-15).

Paul said he also wanted to boast a little, but he called it foolishness. He said, **“Yet in whatever any man may be bold in foolishness, I say I too am bold”** (2nd Corinthians 11:21). Then he told some of his qualifications. And he described some of the many terrible things he had suffered during his ministry.

Then he said he was given a thorn in the flesh, an agent of Satan to buffet him. It was so that he would not be over exalted by the special knowledge God revealed to him. He besought the Lord thrice about it, but God said, **“My grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made fully perfect in weakness”** (2nd Corinthians 12:9). Paul said, **“Therefore I am pleased in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in restrictions, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong”** (2nd Corin-

thians 12:10). Should we, therefore, complain about our lesser troubles, those we have no control over?

He said he was coming a third time, and would still not be a burden to them. He said he would most gladly spend and be spent for their souls, even though more earnestly loving them, the worse he was loved. And he told them to examine themselves whether they were in the faith.

## A Description of **Galatians**

This letter says it is from Paul and all the brothers with him to the congregations of Galatia. He rebuked the Galatians because they had forsaken the good-news of Christ for another one. And with strong words, he told them, **“But even if we, or an agent from heaven, should preach a good-news to you contrary to what we preached to you, let him be accursed”** (Galatians 1:8). Then he repeated the same curse.

He told how Jesus Christ made us righteous by faith instead of works of law. He said no flesh would be made righteous from works of law (because no man can obey it perfectly). He said, **“For I, through law [the law of Christ], died to law [legalism], so that I might live to God [righteously by faith]”** (Galatians 2:19). And he told how the faith of Abraham was reckoned to him for righteousness, not works of law.

Then he quoted the scripture that says as many as are from works of law are under a curse (see Deuteronomy 27:26). He said no man is made righteous by law. Therefore, every man not from faith is cursed. He said Christ redeemed us (who believe) from the curse of the law. He asked how it was they turned again to what put them in bondage. Paul said he wished to be present with them and change his tone, because he was perplexed at them.

He said to them, **“Stand firm therefore in the liberty in which Christ freed us, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage”** (Galatians 5:1). And he warned them, saying that if they were circumcised (for admission to the legal system of the law of Moses), Christ would benefit them nothing. They had fallen from grace. He said they were running well, and he asked who hindered them not to obey the truth. He said the man troubling them would bear the verdict. Then he said, **“O that those who trouble you**

**would even cut it all off**" (Galatians 5:12), meaning go beyond circumcision.

He said they were called to liberty, but not for an opportunity to the flesh, meaning to indulge its lusts. And he warned them about the conflict between flesh and Spirit. He said the two were hostile to each other. That is, the Spirit of God within us and the lusts of our flesh are antagonistic. He said the works of the flesh were apparent. And he listed some of them, such as, adultery, idolatry, jealousies, selfish ambitions, murders, revelings. He warned them, that those who practiced such things would not inherit the kingdom of God. Then he listed some of the fruits of the Spirit, such as, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, meekness, self-control.

### A Description of **Ephesians**

This is a letter of Paul to the sanctified at Ephesus. Paul said he had heard of their goodness. And he prayed that God would enable them to see the greatness of his blessings toward us who believe. He said God subordinated all things under the feet of Christ. And he is the head of the church, which is his body. He said that meant them. (The church is the body of Christ on earth.)

Then he said they had been dead in sins, walking according to the spirit (Satan) that works in the sons of disobedience. They once behaved in the lusts of their flesh, and were by nature children of wrath. But the love of God made them alive with Christ. Among other things, he said, **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God preordained that we should walk in them"** (Ephesians 2:10).

He reminded them how they were once without hope and godless in the world. Paul asked them to walk worthily of their calling, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He told them to no longer be childish, but be truthful in love, to cause all things to grow for Christ, the head of the body.

He told them not to walk as the other Gentiles, in the vanity of their mind. He said the callousness of their heart kept them ignorant and alienated from the life of God. Therefore they gave themselves over to licentiousness. Paul told them to put off the old corrupt man, and put on the new man according to God. He said, **"And become good toward each other, compassionate, forgiving each other, even as also God in Christ forgave us. Become ye therefore imi-**

**tators of God, as beloved children”** (Ephesians 4:32-5:1).

He warned them against fornication and other such sins. He said it was because of those things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. He said, **“For ye were once darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk as children of light”** (Ephesians 5:8). He told them to walk wisely, because the days were evil.

He said wives are to submit to their own husbands, because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church. Husbands are to love their wives even as Christ loved the church. Children are to obey their parents in the Lord, and honor their father and mother. Fathers are not to exasperate their children, but rear them in the training and admonition of the Lord. Bondmen are to be obedient to the masters, serving as to the Lord and not to men. Masters are to do likewise, and ease up on the threats, knowing their master is in the heavens.

### A Description of **Philippians**

This letter is from Paul and Timothy to the sanctified at Philippi. Paul said he thanked God for their participation in the good-news. He said he had them in his heart, and longed for them all in bowels (deep feelings) of Jesus Christ. He told them not to be frightened by those who oppose. He said, **“Because to you it was granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, having the same conflict such as ye saw in me, and now hear is in me”** (Philippians 1:29-30). He told them to consider how Christ sacrificed himself, but God highly exalted him.

He told them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. He said to do all things without grumblings and arguments. He said they should become blameless children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation. He said they shone as lights in the world.

Paul said he suffered the loss of all things so that he might gain Christ and attain to the resurrection of the dead. Then he said, **“Not that I have already obtained or have already been fully perfected, but I press forward ...”** (Philippians 3:12).

He said many walk as enemies of the cross of Christ, **“whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and the glory in their shame, who mind earthly things”** (Philippians 3:19). He said our citizenship exists in the heavens, from which we await our Savior

Jesus Christ. And he will transform our lowly body to become similar to the body of his glory.

He told them to think noble and healthy thoughts. It is harmful and dangerous to meditate on things sordid, obscene, and such like. Purge them from your thoughts as you do garbage in your house, for thoughts lead to actions. Think about good things. It will not always be easy, but it will strengthen your mind. And more important it will make your soul beautiful in the sight of God.

### A Description of **Colossians**

This letter says it is from Paul and Timothy to the faithful brothers at Colossae. Paul said they gave thanks to God, always praying about them. He said they heard about their faith in Christ, and love toward all the sanctified. He said they prayed for them to be filled with the knowledge of the will of Christ. And for them to walk worthily of the Lord, bearing fruit in every good work.

Among other things, Paul said they gave thanks to the Father who rescued them out of the power of darkness. He told of the greatness of Christ. He said all things were created through him and for him. He told the Colossians they were formerly alienated and hostile. But now Christ had reconciled them through his death, to present them holy and unblameable. That is, if they continued steadfast in the faith. He said they had been dead in transgressions, but were made alive together with him.

He told them to seek the things above, where Christ is. He said, **“Put to death therefore your body-parts on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry”** (Colossians 3:5). He said such things were why the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. He told them to put off those evil things, and he gave some more examples. He said they should put on the new man according to an image of him who created them. And he gave some examples of virtuous things, such as kindness, humility, longsuffering. He said above all those things to put on love. He also told them to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, expressing thanks to the God and Father through him.

He told wives to be submissive to their own husbands, husbands to love their wives, children to obey their parents, fathers to not provoke their children, and bondmen to obey their masters. He also told masters to present the bondmen with what was right and equi-

table. He told them to continue in prayer, and pray about them (Paul and his companions) also.

## A Description of **First Thessalonians**

This letter is from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the congregation at Thessalonica. Paul said he thanked God always about them. He told how they were bold to speak the good-news of God to them. He said they did not come in word of flattery, or pretense of greed, or seeking glory from men. He said they became gentle among them as a nurse cherishes her own children.

Paul said they thanked God without ceasing, because they (the Thessalonians) received the word as it truly is, the word of God. He said they wanted to come to them, but Satan hindered them. He said they sent Timothy in order to establish them, and encourage them about their faith. And they were encouraged by Timothy's good report of them.

He told of all the joy they had about them, and prayed night and day to see them and to help them. Paul and his companions had great affection for their brothers in Christ. He said they asked that the Lord would make them increase and abound in love toward each other and toward all men. Love for all mankind is the hallmark of Christianity.

He said he did not want them to be ignorant about those who were asleep (had died), so they would not grieve. For as Jesus died and arose, so also those who sleep in Christ, God will bring with him. He said the Lord was going to descend from heaven with a shout, and gather us up to be with him. And he said, "**Therefore encourage each other with these words**" (1st Thessalonians 4:18). He said that day would come unexpectedly, and the world would not escape destruction. But they were sons of light, and not of the night or of darkness. Therefore they should watch and be sober.

Paul asked them to support their leaders. Then he gave some briefly written rules of righteous living, such as admonishing the unruly, helping the infirmed, praying without ceasing, examining all things, and abstaining from all appearance of evil. And he asked that they pray about them.

## A Description of Second Thessalonians

This letter is also from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the congregation at Thessalonica. Paul said their faith was increasing greatly, and their love for each other abounded. He said all the persecutions and tribulations they endured was evidence of the righteous judgment of God. It was making them be worthy of the kingdom of God. And he told how God was going to render vengeance to the disobedient.

He spoke about the working of Satan. He said it was with all power and marvels of deceit for those who are perishing, because they did not accept the love of the truth. Paul said, **“And because of this God will send them the force of a delusion, for them to believe a lie, so that they might be condemned—all those who did not believe the truth, but who delighted in unrighteousness”** (2nd Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Paul said God chose them from the beginning for salvation. And he asked the brothers there to pray for them. Then he told them to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly against the traditions they received. He also said if any man would not work, neither let him eat. He said he heard some were idle busybodies. He commanded by Christ they work quietly, and eat their own bread.

He told the brothers there not to become weary doing well. And he told them not to associate with any man who did not obey their word by that letter. He said to not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

## A Description of First Timothy

This is a letter from Paul to Timothy. Paul greeted Timothy, and said he urged him to remain in Emphasis so he might command certain men not to teach something different. He said the end of the commandment was love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and non-hypocritical faith. He said some had swerved from those things to empty talk, wanting to be law teachers, but without understanding. Paul said law was not for righteous men, but for the lawless and rebellious.

Paul said he had formerly been a persecutor, but he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. Paul said Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinful men, and he called himself the foremost. He said he was an example of the longsuffering of Christ. Then he praised God, saying, **“Now to the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, alone wise, to God is honor and glory into the ages of the ages. Truly”** (1st Timothy 1:17).

He said God wants all men to be saved and come to knowledge of truth. He said he wanted the women to adorn themselves in disciplined decorum, and not with extravagance. He said women were to learn in silence in all subjection. And a woman was not to teach a man, or act autonomously from him. He said she would be saved through childbearing, if they continued in faith and love and sanctification. Paul was speaking about the general role of women, and not that each one had to bear children for salvation.

Then he said, **“Faithful is the saying, If any man aspires to supervision, he desires a good work”** (1st Timothy 3:1). And he gave the qualifications of the overseer or elder. He also gave the qualifications of helpers or deacons, which are very similar to those of the overseer. And he gave other instructions about elders and widows.

He gave a variety of other instructions, including one about Timothy’s poor health. Then he warned about wanting to be rich, and said the love of money was a root of all the evils. Paul commanded the rich not to be arrogant or hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in the living God. And he told them to do good and be generous, so they might take hold of the eternal life.

### A Description of **Second Timothy**

This is Paul’s second letter to Timothy. After his salutation, Paul said he longed to see him. And he reminded him to rekindle the gift of God that was in him. He said, **“For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of soberness”** (2nd Timothy 1:7). Paul said Christ chose him to be an apostle, and a teacher of Gentiles. He said, **“Because of which reason I also suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to preserve my consignment for that day”** (2nd Timothy 1:12).

He told Timothy to be strong in the grace of Christ. He told him to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and not be entangled in the affairs of life. He warned about perilous times in

the last days. And he described how men would be. They would be lovers of self and money, arrogant, impious, slanderous, savage, traitors, and the like.

Paul mentioned some of his virtues and some of his persecutions. Then he said, **“And also all those who want to live devoutly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will go forward to worse, leading astray and being led astray”** (2nd Timothy 3:12-13). And he said the time was coming when they would not tolerate sound doctrine. He said they would accumulate teachers according to their own desires, and would turn the ear away from the truth.

Then he told how the time of his dissolution (death) was imminent. He said he had fought the good fight, and kept the faith. Therefore the crown of righteousness was laid up for him by the Lord. And not for him only, but for all who have loved his appearing.

## A Description of **Titus**

This is a letter from Paul to Titus. Paul first told about his apostleship, and then he greeted Titus. He said he left him behind in Crete so that he should set in order the things lacking. He also told him to appoint elders in every city, and he gave their qualifications.

Then Paul said, **“For there are also many insubordinate men, vain talkers and deceivers, especially those from circumcision, who must be muzzled, men who subvert whole houses, teaching things that they ought not, for sake of ugly profit”** (Titus 1:10-11). And he quoted the words of a prophet of their own, who said, **“Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies”** (Titus 1:12). Paul told Titus to reprove them harshly, so they might be sound in the faith.

Then he gave advice for the aged men and women, and for the young women and the young men. And he told bondmen to be obedient to their masters. He told how we should deny worldly lusts and live righteously. He told how sinful they all were formerly, but the kindness of God saved them through Christ. Then he gave some instructions about a few men.

## A Description of Philemon

This letter from Paul is addressed to three men, but primarily to Philemon. Paul said he thanked God, remembering him always in his prayers, having heard of his love and faith. Paul said he was an aged man, and he made a plea for a man he called his child Onesimus, whom he begot (spiritually).

Onesimus was apparently a bondman who had escaped from Philemon. Paul had converted him to Christ, and he had great affection for him. So he sent him back, and asked Philemon to welcome him. He wanted to keep Onesimus as a helper, but he would not without Philemon's approval. He urged Philemon to receive him now as a brother.

Paul said he was confident he would do above what he said, and he asked him to prepare a lodging for him. He hoped by his (Philemon's) prayers to be granted to him.

## A Description of Hebrews

The author does not identify himself, but he was probably the apostle Paul. It is not addressed to anyone in particular, but it was obviously written to Hebrews. It also does not contain a greeting or salutation. The author simply began by telling how God spoke formerly by the prophets. But in the last days (of direct revelation) he spoke by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things. The author said the Son was superior to the heavenly agents.

Then the author quoted several Old Testament scriptures about the Son, including one that refers to us as God's children. And he said, **"Since therefore the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might make him who has the power of death impotent, that is, the devil"** (Hebrews 2:14).

He said for us not to harden our hearts as the Israelites did in the wilderness. God swore in his wrath they would not enter into his rest because they were so rebellious. He said their carcasses fell in the wilderness because they were disobedient. And he said, **"Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest, so that not any man may fall by the same example of disobedience"** (Hebrews 4:11).

He told about Jesus as a great high priest. He said Jesus suffered

in the days of his flesh, and **“although being a Son, he learned obedience from the things that he suffered. And having been fully perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation to all those who obey him”** (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Then he rebuked those he wrote to. He said many things about Jesus were difficult to explain, and they had become sluggish in hearing. He said by that time they ought to be teachers. Instead, they needed milk, and not solid food (referring to knowledge). He said, however, that God did not forget their work and labor of love toward his name, serving the sanctified. But he urged them to be diligent until the end so they could inherit the promises.

Then he said that Jesus became a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (see Psalm 110:4). There is much mystery about Melchizedek. The author’s point was that Jesus was a priest continually, like Melchizedek had been. He was not like the Levitical priests of the law of Moses. They were continually replaced because they would die, but Jesus lives forever. Since this book was apparently written for the Hebrews the author gave them illustrations they could understand.

The author said the law of Moses (with its priestly system) became annulled because of its weakness. He said Jesus had become the surety of a better covenant. He said there is no longer a need for continual sacrifices for sins. Jesus did it once for all when he offered up himself. It was the perfect sacrifice requiring no more. And Jesus is mediator of a superior covenant based on superior promises.

Then he warned, **“For when we sin willfully after taking the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and of fire, a fervor that is going to devour the opposition”** (Hebrews 10:26-27). He mentioned the death penalty of the law of Moses. And he said there would be much worse punishment to him who rejects the new covenant of Christ. That worse punishment is hell.

Then he spoke of their suffering after they learned the truth. He said they were **“partly made a spectacle, both by reviling and afflictions, and partly having become companions of those so treated”** (Hebrews 10:33). He told how they even accepted with joy the plundering of their possessions. For they knew they had a superior and enduring existence in the heavens. He said they had need of perseverance, so they might receive the promise.

Next he wrote about faith. And he gave many examples through history of faithful men. He began with Abel, Enoch, and Noah. He mentioned Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob living alien in the land of promise. He mentioned Sarah giving birth beyond the time of age. He said they **“confessed that they were foreigners and sojourners on the earth ... that they are seeking a fatherland”** (Hebrews 11:13). He said they aspired for a superior land, a heavenly one. Therefore God was not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. And we should also live so God will not be ashamed of us.

He named several others, saying time would fail to tell of them. He said, **“They wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, restricted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth”** (Hebrews 11:37-38). He said with such a great cloud of witnesses around us, we should run by perseverance the contest set before us. And we should look to Jesus the pathfinder and perfecter of the faith. He endured the cross, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. And he said we should not be weary in our souls.

Then he said, **“And have ye forgotten the exhortation that reasons with you as with sons, My son, do not disparage the chastening of the Lord, nor become disheartened when punished by him? For whom the Lord loves he chastens. And he whips every son whom he receives”** (Hebrews 12:5-6). He said no chastening at the time seems joyful but sorrowful. Yet afterward it yields peaceable fruit of righteousness to those trained by it. One of the great errors of modern times has been to outlaw corporal punishment.

After that he gave some brief instructions about how to live right, such as loving strangers, remembering the prisoners (persecuted Christians not criminals), not defiling the marriage bed, not loving money, remembering those who lead them. He told them not to be carried away by various and foreign doctrines. He said not to forget benevolence and fellowship. He told them to have confidence in those who led them, and to pray for him (the author) and his companions. He called for the God of peace to make them fully qualified in every good work through Jesus Christ. He ended the letter, saying he planned to see them with brother Timothy, who had been set free.

## A Description of James

James said he was a bondman of God and Christ, and was writing to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion. He began, **“Consider it all joy, my brothers, when ye encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces perseverance”** (James 1:2-3). He told them to let perseverance have a perfect work, so they might be perfect and complete.

Then he said if any of them lacked wisdom, he should ask God who gives to all generously, and it would be given him. However, he must ask in faith without doubting. And he said they should not practice favoritism. He said it was wrong to give a special welcome to a rich man, but slight a poor man. He told how (as a class) God chose the poor of the world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. But the rich were oppressive and blasphemous. He said when they respect personages, they work sin.

He also spoke about faith and works, saying that faith without works was dead. He taught against salvation by faith only (belief without works). For he said, **“Thou believe that there is one God, thou do well. The demons also believe, and shudder”** (James 2:19).

After that he told how hard it is to control the tongue. He condemned envy and selfish ambition. He said wars and fightings were caused by their pleasures warring in their body-parts. He said they envy and cannot obtain, so they fight and make war. He said they did not have because they either did not ask, or asked wrongfully to spend it on their pleasures.

He said friendship of the world is hatred of God. And whoever wants to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. He told the sinners to cleanse their hands, purify their hearts, and be sorrowful.

He told them not to boast about the future, for their life was like a fleeting vapor. And he told the rich to weep and howl for the miseries that were coming. He told how the rich cheated their workmen, lived in luxury, and oppressed the righteous. He told his brothers to be patient like the farmer waiting for his crops, and he mentioned the prophets and Job as examples.

## A Description of First Peter

The letter begins, **“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen who are sojourners of the Dispersion ...”** He praised God, who begot us again, and gave us a living hope, an inheritance in the heavens. And he said, **“In which ye greatly rejoice, although made sorrowful in various trials. Since it is now necessary for a little while, so that the proof of your faith, much more precious than gold that perishes, and though proven by fire, may be found for praise and honor and for glory at the revealing of Jesus Christ”** (1st Peter 1:6-7). He called them a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for an acquired possession (we were bought by the blood of Christ).

Then he said, **“Having your behavior good among the Gentiles, so that, upon which they speak against you as evildoers, they may glorify God in the day of visitation, from having observed your good works”** (1st Peter 2:12). And he said they should obey rulers. He said they were free men, but should not use their freedom as a cover-up of evil, but as bondmen of God.

He told household servants to submit to their masters, even if they suffered wrongfully (God will avenge). And he mentioned the suffering of Christ as an example. He told wives to be subordinate to their own husbands. And he mentioned Sarah, who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. He told husbands to apportion worth to the female as joint-heirs of the grace of life. He said they were the weaker vessel.

He said they should not live in debauchery, but be serious and sober for the prayers. And he told them to have fervent love for each other, **“because love will cover a multitude of sins”** (1st Peter 4:9). And he said for them to use whatever gifts they had as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, so that God may be glorified in all things through Christ.

Then he said, **“Beloved, ye should not be surprised at the fieriness in you, which occurs for a trial to you, like a strange thing happening to you”** (1st Peter 4:12). He told them to rejoice that they were partakers in the sufferings of the Christ so they might rejoice with exceeding joy when his glory is revealed. And he warned, **“Be sober, be vigilant. Your opponent the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom to devour”** (1st Peter 5:8). He said the God of all grace would strengthen them.

## A Description of Second Peter

The letter begins, “**Simon Peter, a bondman and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received an equally precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.**” Peter said the greatest promises had been given to them. He said they could become companions of the divine nature, and escape the corruption in the world. He told them to apply all eagerness, and furnish in their faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, piety, brotherly affection, and love.

He said the putting off of his tent (meaning his death) was imminent, as Jesus indicated to him. He said they were not men who followed in cunningly devised myths, but were eyewitnesses of the majesty of Christ. And he warned about false prophets developing among them. He said many would follow their wantonness. He said God holds in reserve unrighteous men for the day of judgment. Especially homosexuals, and reckless self-willed men. He said they promised freedom, but were themselves bondmen of corruption.

He also warned them of scoffers that would come afterward, such as men who question the coming of Christ. He said the heavens and the earth were now being preserved for fire in a day of judgment and destruction of irreverent men. He said the Lord was not slack about his promise, but was patient, not wanting any to perish.

He said, “**But we anticipate a new heavens and a new earth according to his promise, in which righteousness dwells**” (2nd Peter 3:13). He mentioned their beloved brother Paul, whose letters had some things hard to understand, which the ignorant twist. Such as misinterpreting and/or misapplying what Paul said. An example I will give is the error of claiming Paul taught salvation by faith only. Peter told them to keep watch, and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, to whom is the glory both now and into the day of the age (meaning forever).

## A Description of First John

The author does not identify himself. However, the ancient church patriarchs said this and the next two letters were written by the apostle John. And I see no reason to dispute it. Like Hebrews this letter contains no salutation. He began the book by saying they heard, and saw, and touched, the Word of life (Jesus Christ). And they declare those things so that we might also have fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus. He said, **“And we write these things to you, so that our joy may be made full”** (1st John 1:4). He said God was light with no darkness. And if we walk in the light, the blood of Christ cleanses us from every sin. He said if we say we have no sin, the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he will forgive and cleanse us.

John said he wrote those things so that we might not sin. And if any man does sin, Jesus Christ is our advocate with the father. He said if we keep his commandments then we know that we know him. And if any man says he knows him, but does not keep his commandments, he is a liar. He also said any man who loves his brother abides in the light, but he who hates his brother is in the darkness.

Then he wrote words of encouragement separately to each of four groups: little children, fathers, children, and young men. After that he told them not to love the world, or the things in the world. He said if any man loves the world, the love of the Father was not in him.

John said every man doing righteousness has been begotten of him. Then he said, **“Behold what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we may be called children of God”** (1st John 3:1). He said when he is made known we will be like him. And every man having this hope purifies himself, just as that man is pure.

Then he told them not to believe every spirit, but to examine them. He said there were many false prophets. And the world hears them because they are of the world. He said, **“We are of God. He who knows God hears us. He who is not of God does not hear us”** (1st John 4:6). He said God is love (agape love), and if we love each other, God abides in us. He said we love him, because he first loved us.

John said he wrote those things to those who believe in the name of the Son of God, so they might know they had eternal life. He said we were of God, and the whole world is set in the evil.

### A Description of **Second John**

This letter says it was written by the elder to the chosen lady and her children. He mentioned the commandment they received from the beginning, that they should love each other. He said, **“And this is love, that we should walk according to his commandments”** (2nd John 1:6). Then he said many deceivers had gone forth into the world. He said to watch so they would not lose what they wrought, but might receive a full reward. He said he hoped to come and speak mouth to mouth.

### A Description of **Third John**

This letter begins, **“The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth”** (3rd John 1:1). He said he rejoiced exceedingly having heard of him, and that he walked in truth. He said, **“I have no greater joy than these things that I hear my children walking in truth”** (3rd John 1:4).

John said, **“I wrote to the congregation, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first of them, did not accept us”** (3rd John 1:9). He said if he comes he will remember his works. He said he had many things to write, but hoped to see him, and speak mouth to mouth.

### A Description of **Jude**

Jude said he wrote this letter to the called of Jesus Christ. He said he needed to exhort them to earnestly contend for the faith. He told about certain irreverent men. He said they sneaked in and were perverting the grace of God into licentiousness.

He reminded them how the homosexuals of Sodom and Gomorrah underwent the punishment of eternal fire. He said such men revile whatever they have not seen. He said, **“But whatever they understand naturally, as the irrational beasts, in these things they are corrupted”** (Jude 1:10). He uttered woe against them.

He encouraged the brothers to keep themselves in the love of God, and to await the mercy of our Lord Christ for eternal life. He ended with praise to God.

## A Description of Revelation

The apostle John said he wrote this book. It is the last book in the Bible, and it contains many things hard to understand. John said it was the revelation of Christ **“that God gave him to show his bondmen what must happen quickly.”** John said he was on the Isle of Patmos, and he heard a great voice behind him like a trumpet. John said he turned to see the voice, and saw in the midst of seven golden lampstands somebody resembling a son of man.

Then he described his appearance. He said he was clothed down to the foot, and girded about with a golden belt at the breasts. He said, **“And his head and hair were white as wool, white as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet resembling highly refined metal, as in a furnace having been fiery hot, and his voice as the sound of many waters, and having in his right hand seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword coming out of his mouth. And the sight of him was as the sun shines in its strength”** (Revelation 1:14-16).

John said he fell at his feet as dead (meaning he fainted). However, he laid his right hand on him, and said, **“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and he who lives. And I became dead, and behold, I am living into the ages of the ages. Truly. And I have the keys of death and of Hades”** (Revelation 1:17-18). Hence, that heavenly man was Jesus Christ.

He told John the seven stars in his hand were the agents of the congregations, and the seven golden lampstands were the congregations. Then he told him what to write to each of them. He mentioned the good things and the bad things about each one. He gave them warnings and encouragement. He also mentioned many rewards for those who remained faithful.

Next John said he saw a door opened in heaven, and a voice told him to come up there. He said he saw a throne in heaven, and him sitting upon it. He said there were twenty-four elders on thrones around the throne. He said lightnings and voices and thunders proceeded out of the throne.

Then he described four beings around the throne, one like a lion, one like a young bull, one with the face of a man, and one like a flying eagle. He said they and the twenty-four elders praised God, say-

ing he was worthy to take the glory and honor and power, because he created all things.

Then he saw a book at the right hand of him on the throne. It was sealed with seven seals. Nobody but the Lamb of God was worthy to open the book. When he took it the four beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before him. And they said he was worthy, because he was killed and purchased us from God by his blood. Hence, the Lamb was Jesus Christ. And many thousands of agents joined in worshipping God.

When the Lamb opened the first four seals four horses appeared. The rider of the white horse went conquering. The rider of the red horse took peace from the earth. The rider of the third horse had a balance in his hand. The rider of the fourth horse was named Death.

When the fifth seal was opened John saw under the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God. And they cried out, **“Master, Holy and True, how long do thou not judge and avenge our blood from those who dwell on the earth?”** (Revelation 6:10). They were told to still rest a time. When the sixth seal was opened a great earthquake and some other terrible things occurred on the earth. And the men of the earth hid themselves in the caves and rocks to hide from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of his wrath had come.

After that John told of the bondmen of God who were sealed on their foreheads. The number of those sealed was 12,000 each from the twelve tribes of Israel, totaling 144,000. Then he saw a great multitude that none could number. They were out of every kind of people, and they praised God and the Lamb. John said they were those who came out of the great tribulation. And they washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. He said because of that they are before his throne, and serve him continually. When the seventh seal was opened there was brief silence in heaven.

Then he saw seven agents standing before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. When the first four trumpets were sounded one-third of the earth, the sea, the (fresh) waters, and the sky were stricken. And he spoke of three woes remaining.

When the fifth agent sounded the pit of the abyss was opened, and smoke and locusts came out. The locusts were given power like scorpions to torment men who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. John said one woe was departed, two more were to come. Then he heard a voice telling the sixth agent to loose the four

agents to kill the third part of men. Yet the rest of the men still did not repent of their evil deeds. After some other things John said the second woe departed, and the third woe comes quickly.

After that John saw a great sign in heaven. It was a woman arrayed with the sun, moon, and stars. And she cried out with birth pains. He saw another sign in heaven, which was a great fiery dragon with seven heads. He cast the third part of the stars of the sky upon the earth. And he stood before the woman waiting to devour her child. John said she gave birth to a son, who was going to tend all nations with a rod of iron. He was taken up to God and to his throne. Hence, the child must have been Jesus.

After that John said war developed in heaven. Michael and his agents fought the dragon (he was the Devil), and cast him and his agents out to the earth. John said he heard a voice saying the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ had come to pass, **“Because the accuser of our brothers was cast out, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony”** (Revelation 12:10-11).

After that John saw a beast rising up out of the sea. It also had seven heads, and it was similar to a leopard, a bear, and a lion. He said the dragon gave it his power, his throne, and great authority. The whole earth worshiped the dragon and the beast. The beast blasphemed God and those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to make war with the sanctified, and to overcome them. Then John spoke words of encouragement for the sanctified.

After that John saw another beast coming up out of the earth. It had two horns similar to a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. It was later called **“the false prophet”** (Rev 16:13). It made all on earth worship the first beast. And it made all have marks on their right hand or on their foreheads. John said the number of the beast was 666. Then John said he saw the Lamb standing on the mount Zion with 144,000 having its name and the name of his father on their foreheads. He said they had been redeemed from the earth.

After those things John saw the seven agents having the seven last plagues. They had the bowls of the wrath of God. When each was poured out it caused pain and suffering in the world. Yet men still blasphemed God, and would not repent of their works. After the sixth bowl was poured out John saw three frogs that came out of the mouths of the dragon and the two beasts. He said they were

**“spirits of demons, doing signs that go forth to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together to the battle of that great day of the Almighty God. ... And he gathered them together into the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon”** (Revelation 16:14, 16).

After that an agent showed John a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast. The woman was adorned luxuriously. And she had a golden cup containing abominations and the filthy things of her fornication. Upon her forehead was a name written, **“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF WHORES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH”** (Revelation 17:5). She was also drunk from the blood of the sanctified and the witnesses of Jesus.

After those things another agent cried out in a mighty voice that Babylon the great had fallen. He said her plagues would come in one day, and she would be utterly burned with fire. Then he described in much detail the loss of all her wealth. And all associated with her would mourn and lament when they saw her destruction.

After that John said he saw heaven opened, and a white horse whose rider was called Faithful and True. His name is called The Word of God. The armies of heaven followed him on white horses. John said he would smite the nations, and tread the winepress of the anger of God. He said, **“And he has on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”** (Revelation 19:16). Then the two beasts were thrown alive into the lake of fire.

After that the dragon, who is the Devil and Satan, was bound a thousand years. John said he saw thrones, and the souls of the martyred of Jesus, and those who did not worship the beast. They lived and reigned with the Christ the thousand years. After that Satan will be loosed to gather the nations for one final battle, but they will be defeated. Then John said, **“And the devil who leads them astray was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also were the beast and the false prophet. And they will be tormented day and night into the ages of the ages”** (Revelation 20:10).

Next John said he saw a great white throne, and him who sits upon it. He saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And books were opened, one of which was (the book) of life. John said the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their works. And if any man was found not

written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Next John said he saw a new sky and a new earth, for the first ones passed away. He also saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. He heard a great voice from heaven, saying God will dwell with men. And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes. God told him that he who overcomes would inherit those things, and he would be a son to him. But all evil men would have their part in the lake of fire. Then John described the beauty of the new Jerusalem, with its gold and precious stones.

Then the Lord said he was coming quickly with his reward to render to each man as his work will be. He said those doing his commandments would enter the city, but outside were all the sinners. He said he had sent his agent to testify those things for the congregations. And he said, **“I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he who hears, let him say, Come. And he who is thirsty, let him come. He who desires, let him take the water of life freely”** (Revelation 22:16-17).

John concluded the book, saying, **“He who testifies these things says, Yea, I come quickly. Truly. Yea, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus is with all the sanctified. Truly.”**