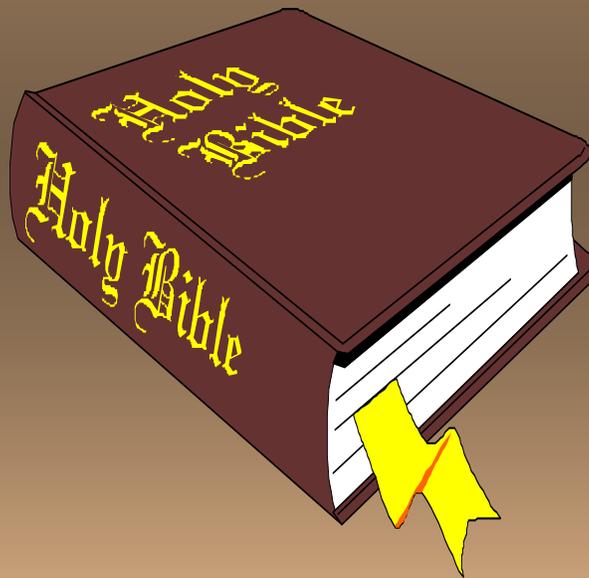


*A Year's Spiritual Journey through a Study of
Old Testament Books*

Part #1

Important Lessons To be learned From
**OLD TESTAMENT
HISTORY BOOKS**



13 Lessons

Prepared by:
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2005

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To be Learned
From a Study of*

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Lesson One

An Introduction & Overview of Old Testament History Books

Two study approaches are being worked on to cover the entire Bible: (1) One will be an actual study of the Old Testament Books in a year's time; (2) The other will be a study of important lessons to be learned from Old Testament Books to be covered in a year's time. This series of studies is the first quarter of #2 that is titled, *"Important Lessons from Old Testament History Books."* We will be looking at special insights gained from each of the Old Testament History Books. After this introductory lesson, we will look at the Old Testament History Books for important lessons to be learned. This series of studies assumes that the student has some what of a grasp of Old Testament History. However, it would be very profitable if a book a week could be read before each lesson. *"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."* (Romans 15:4).

AN OVERVIEW OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

- 1) From Creation to the Great Flood (Genesis 1-6).....Beginning to c. 2348 B.C.
- 2) From the Great Flood to the Call of Abraham (Genesis 7-11).....2348—1921 B.C.
- 3) The Beginnings of the Chosen Nation (Genesis 12—45).....1921—1706 B.C.
- 4) The Chosen Nation in Egypt (Genesis 46-50; Exodus 1-14).....1706—1491 B.C.
- 5) The Chosen Nation in the Wilderness Wanderings (Exodus 15-40;
Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).....1491—1451 B.C.
- 6) The Chosen Nation Conquering Canaan (Joshua).....1451—1444 B.C.
- 7) The Chosen Nation under Judges (Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel 1-8).....1444—1075 B.C.
- 8) The United Kingdom (1 Samuel 9-31; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-11).....1075—955 B.C.
- 9) The Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings 1-16).....955—722 B.C.
- 10) The Chosen Nation as a Remnant in Judah (2 Kings 17-23).....722—586 B.C.
- 11) The Chosen Nation in Babylonian Captivity (2 Kings 24-25).....586—536 B.C.
- 12) The Chosen Nation Re-established in Judah (Ezra; Nehemiah; Esther).....536—434 B.C.

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY BOOKS

The term "Holy Bible" has been placed on this book by men who had a high regard for its claim to be the "Word of God" (Hebrews 4:12). Other terms are used in various places in both the Old and New Testaments, such as: "Scripture" (2 Timothy 3:16); "the Faith" (Jude 3); "the Truth" (John 17:17); "The word of the Lord" (Isaiah 1:10), etc. The Old Testament History books cover a range from the Beginning down to about 434 B.C. The writing of these books began in about 1491 B.C.—thus, making a little over 1000 years to finish the work. It is believed that God used a minimum of eight different writers during this time: Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Ezra, Nehemiah, Mordecai. However, it should be obvious that other writers were used as well. In addition there were 16 different writers that God used to give the Jewish Nation the Old Testament Books of Prophecy. Their books carry the name of the prophet with

the exception of Lamentations (written by Jeremiah). Thus, we have a bare minimum of 24 men used by God to produce the Old Testament over a period of 1000+ years. These books were written in the Hebrew language, with a few sections in the Aramaic language. Around 200-300 B.C., a translation of the Old Testament was put into the Greek language. It is referred to as “The Septuagint” (or LXX).

The arrangement of the books in the Old Testament in our English versions were fixed in about the third century A.D. It was an effort to group them with books of the same nature. Below is this arrangement:

- Section 1 -- 5 Books of Law (also History)
- Section 2 -- 12 Books of History
- Section 3 -- 5 Books of Poetry (Wisdom Literature)
- Section 4 -- 5 Books of Major Prophets
- Section 5 -- 12 Books of Minor Prophets

Jesus gives an indication of how the Jews had these books arranged in Luke 24:44—“***And He said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.***” The Law of Moses (1st 5 books); the Prophets (12 books of History and the 17 books of Prophecy); and the Psalms (5 books of poetry or wisdom literature).

The Old Testament books make the claim of being given by God—from the first writer, Moses (Exodus 20:18-21), to the last prophet, Malachi (1:1). The New Testament writers reaffirm this fact (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 1:1-2). They are inspired of God! The Holy Spirit moved these men to speak for God.

AN IMPORTANT FACT ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

These books were never given to the Gentile world, but only to the Jewish Nation. (Psalm 147:20). It was a Covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants. These books were given to help preserve the Jewish Nation until the coming of the Messiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Once the Messiah came, the Old Covenant was abrogated and a New Covenant was to be entered into—but not just for the Jewish people, but for all people. (Mark 16:15-16; Ephesians 3:3-7).

Since the Old Testament has been laid aside and a new and better Covenant has been given by God, why study the Old Testament (Hebrews 8:1-13). Many reasons could be given! But the passage in Romans (15:4) states a reason clearly—“***were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.***” The Old Testament has so many examples (good and bad) for us to learn by. They continually show how God dealt with the Hebrew Nation over long periods of time that can give insight for us today. The New Testament writers constantly make reference back to these writings to show their value for us today.

The Old Testament serves as a background for the New Testament, which helps us to better understand what is being taught in the New Testament. The Old Testament Law helps us to see what God held all mankind accountable unto (Romans 1:18-2:16). The Old Testament

books helps us to see God's dealings with people through the centuries—it shows the fulfilling of God's promises, His wrath being carried out upon the disobedient, and His mercy extended to those who turn to Him with their heart, soul, and mind. It is a rich mine to be dug out to find its unlimited treasures!

*“The Empire of Caesar is gone;
The legions of Rome are moldering in the dust;
The avalanches that Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away;
The Pride of the Pharaohs has fallen;
The Pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands;
Tyre is the rock for bleaching fishermen's nets;
Sidon has scarcely left a wreck behind;
But the Word of God still survives! All things that threatened to extinguish it have only aided it; and it only proves every day how transient the noblest monument that man can build, and how enduring is the least Word God has spoken. Tradition has dug for it a grave; Intolerance has lighted for it many a faggot; Many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; Many a Demas has forsaken it, but the Word of God still endures”* (John Cumming)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The spiritual riches are there for us to find. Let's set our hearts on finding the true riches and make them a part of our everyday lives to the glory of God. Read with us the 17 books that we will be looking at in the next 12 weeks. ***“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”*** (John 6:27)

Lesson Two

“Who Can We Trust?”

(Genesis)

Introduction

1. God warns his people to put away lying and speak truth—do not lie to one another! (Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9; Exodus 20:16).
2. Primary reason for not lying to others—I don’t want to be lied to myself!
 - a) I want people to be truthful, not deceptive.
 - b) If I catch people lying to me:
 - 1) It becomes a real problem to believe them or not from then on.
 - 2) Mistrust of other human beings is bad enough at times....without adding to the problem.
 - c) We expect people to be good to their word, their promises!
3. This same problem has to be dealt with in the spiritual realm.
 - a) How do I know that God tells the truth?
 - b) God says that he does not lie! (Hebrews 6:18)
 - c) Yes....but what evidence do I have that uphold God’s truthfulness?
 - d) This is one of the reasons why God has recorded so much history of His dealings with men....to prove His reliability!
 - e) The book of Revelation ends with a strong stress on this fact....***“These words are true and faithful.”*** (21:5; 22:6).
 - f) Why so much stress on God’s faithfulness?
 - 1) It shows that it is a common problem of mankind.
 - 2) A problem of believing God.
 - 3) Not only believing when it comes to promises....
 - 4) But, as well, when it comes to His punishments.
4. The Book of Genesis adds strong evidence for believing God’s promises and threats!

Discussion**I. GOD’S THREATS IN GENESIS*****A. Threat of death to Adam & Eve.***

- 1) Genesis 2:17
- 2) The Serpent’s approach was to cause Mother Eve to doubt this threat, thus making God a liar!
 - a) Genesis 3:4
 - b) It worked!
 - c) She doubted....she ate....she died!
- 3) God did not give an idle threat of death!
 - a) He meant it....and carried it out!
 - b) They both ate and both died that day—SPIRITUALLY!
 - c) They also began to die physically because they were driven from the “Tree of Life.” (Genesis 3:22-24).
- 4) Because Sin, Disobedience, Unbelief bring separation between God and man, which is called DEATH in Scripture.

- a) Ephesians 2:1
- b) And man has been paying the penalty of disobedience ever since.

B. Threat of total destruction of mankind from off the earth.

- 1) Genesis 6:7, 13
- 2) Again, God did not make an idle threat!
 - a) Genesis 7:17-24
 - b) All but the 8 souls that went into the ark were destroyed!
- 3) God carried out His threat just like He said He would.

C. Threat of total destruction of Sodom & Gomorrha.

- 1) Genesis 18:20
 - a) God sent messengers down to see first-hand of the conditions.
 - b) Abraham, upon learning of God's intentions, made intercession for the cities.
 - c) If 50, 40, 30, 20, 10 righteous people can be found, will you spare the cities?
 - d) God's answer.... **"Yes, even 10."**
 - e) But not even 10 righteous people could be found.
 - f) Only 4 were given safe passage out of the city, but one was punished for her disobedience in looking back!
- 2) God did not make an idle threat. (Genesis 19:24-25)

II. SOME OF GOD'S PROMISES IN GENESIS

A. The promise of one to come to bruise the head of the serpent!

- 1) Genesis 3:15
 - a) We believe this to be a veiled promise of the coming of Christ (Messiah).
 - b) The Serpent had tempted and deceived the woman, and helped to bring about the fall of man.
 - c) It would be fitting that the seed of the woman would bring about the Serpent's fall.
- 2) We believe that the seed of the woman was Jesus.
 - a) He bruised the head of the Serpent when He died on the cross and resurrected.
 - b) Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8
- 3) God did not make an idle promise, but fulfilled it as stated!

B. God's promise to Abraham.

- 1) Genesis 12:2-3; 22:18
 - a) God promised to make of Abraham not only a great nation, but that many nations would come out of him.
 - b) He likewise promised that through his seed all nations would be blessed.
 - c) It took centuries for all of these promises to be fulfilled, but they were all fulfilled.
- 2) The fulfillment of the "seed" promise is shown in Galatians 3:16.
 - a) Jesus came to bless all nations—with hope of salvation.

- b) The great commission shows this as well (Mark 16:15-16).
- 3) God does carry out His promises...”***He is the Faithful and True One.***”

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. These and many other promises & threats God did make throughout His Holy Word.
 - a) These are not idle threats & promises.
 - b) Everyone was carried out just as God said they would be.
 - c) The evidence is overwhelming that God means what he says.
 - d) Truly, “***God does not lie***”.... Nor attempt to deceive man!
2. God has promised heaven someday to the faithful!
 - a) Will He carry out that promise?
 - b) Or do you believe that God is a liar?
3. God has promised hell someday to the disbelieving or disobedient!
 - a) Does He mean what He says?
 - b) Will He carry out His threat?
 - c) It is an awesome thing to contemplate!
 - d) Will God change His mind in the day of judgment?
 - e) Is God a liar and a deceiver?
4. What we believe about God’s threats or promises determines what we will do!
 - a) If we believe Him, we will certainly obey Him.
 - b) If we don’t believe Him, what is the point of obedience?
5. What do you believe about Mark 16:15-16?
 - a) Do we believe that those who believe and are baptized will be saved?
 - b) If we believe, will we not obey in baptism?
 - c) But do we believe God’s threatening?
 - d) Do we believe that the non-believer will be condemned?
6. Has God lied about these matters?

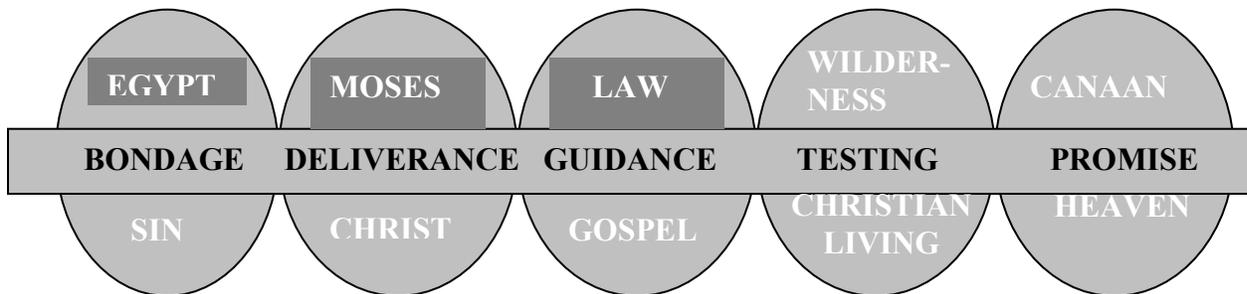
Lesson Three

“The Unity of the Bible”

(Exodus)

Introduction

1. One of the most interesting studies of the Bible is in comparing the Old with the New.
 - a) In such, we find one of the greatest proofs of its Divine Origin.
 - b) We find one of the greatest indications of the Bible’s Unity.
 - c) It is a great unfolding of the plan of God through the ages!
2. God’s wisdom is clearly seen when comparing the Old with the New.
 - a) In the Old, we find God required many things with no apparent reason.
 - b) In the New, we can see the reason for such things being required.
 - c) They were meant to foreshadow the New.
 - d) Terms often used....Type & Anti-Type.
3. Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11
4. Many of the songs that we sing are based on this very comparison of Old with the New.
 - a) *“I’ve reached the Land of Corn and Wine” or “Beulah Land.”*
 - b) *“On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand.”*
 - c) *“Out of my Bondage.”*
 - d) *“Shall We Gather at the River.”*
5. In Exodus is one of the outstanding parallels of the Old with the New.

Discussion**I. BONDAGE*****A. Because of man’s sinning in the Garden, he needed a Redeemer.***

- 1) One whom God had promised to come to bless all nations (Genesis 22:18)
- 2) God worked with and through Abraham’s descendants for 2000 years to bring about that promise.
- 3) Abraham’s descendants had gone into Egypt, multiplied greatly, and caused the Egyptians to fear them—put them to slave labor.
- 4) After many years, God called them out of Bondage—out of Egypt.
- 5) God delivered them without a fight on their part.

B. We are in the same position as they were.

- 1) We, too, are in bondage to a wicked ruler....Sin or Satan. (Galatians 4:3)
- 2) We were unable to deliver ourselves from our hard taskmaster. (Eph. 2:12)

- 3) We needed a Deliverer!

II. DELIVERANCE

A. Israel

- 1) In God's own good time, He sent a deliverer—Moses!
 - a) It was necessary to endow him with miraculous powers to convince the people.
 - b) In order to establish faith in his leadership.
- 2) Then, the people were called upon to make a choice:
 - a) Follow Moses & be made free;
 - b) Or, remain in bondage!
- 3) Their deliverance finally came at the Red Sea.
 - a) The enemy still pursued them.
 - b) God performed another great miracle through Moses. (Exo. 14:13)
 - c) They marched through on dry ground to the other side.
 - d) The Egyptians were slain when the water came back upon them.
 - e) There was great rejoicing. (Exo. 14:30)

B. Under the New Testament:

- 1) Again, in God's own good time, He sent a Deliverer—Christ! (Gal. 4:4-5)
- 2) God endowed Him with unlimited miraculous powers to convince us. (John 20:30-31; Heb. 2:4)
- 4) We, too, are called upon to make a choice:
 - a) Follow Christ and be made free. (John 8:32)
 - b) Or remain in bondage to sin and death!
- 5) Those who choose to follow Christ find our deliverance at our "Red Sea" (Water) (1 Cor. 10:1-4; Mark 16:15-16)
- 6) And we, too, will find occasion for rejoicing. (Acts 8:39)

III. GUIDANCE

A. Israel:

- 1) Deliverance is not enough...we need Divine guidance to know how to live.
 - a) There are many temptations, trials, tribulations to be faced.
 - b) We need help along the way.
- 2) God gave his people a great LAW...like no other nation had.
 - a) As long as they kept it...they were blessed.
 - b) But disobedience brought sore punishment.

B. Under the New Testament:

- 1) As Israel was given a Law for guidance...we are too!
- 2) This is the "Law of Christ" called "the perfect law of liberty." (Jas. 1:25)
- 3) We have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3)
 - a) If we keep it, we are greatly blessed.
 - b) If we disobey it, we will be punished.
- 4) The blessed are the obedient. (Rev. 22:14).

IV. TESTING

A. Israel:

- 1) Israel was delivered to serve God!

- a) He sanctified them, cleansed them, set them apart for His service.
- b) He made them a nation of priests to the nations.
- 2) Their journey to the Promised Land was a time of TESTING!
 - a) They had to learn to rely upon God for food & water.
 - b) They had to trust him for direction & protection.
 - c) When the time came—THEY FAILED THE TEST.
 - d) They disbelieved and wavered. (Heb. 3:17-19).
 - e) Only 3 out of that whole generation entered into Canaan.

B. Today, under the New Testament:

- 1) We, too, have been delivered to serve God.
 - a) Rom. 6:22
 - b) We have been cleansed, sanctified, set apart for His service. (1 Cor. 6:11)
 - c) We, too, have become a Holy Nation, a Royal Priesthood to the Nations (1 Pet. 2:9).
- 2) The remainder of our time on earth is for Testing.
 - a) We must learn to rely upon God. (Matt. 6:33)
 - b) The way will be hard at times and require much patience to endure. (James 1:12).
 - c) We are warned not to FALL as they did in the wilderness through unbelief (Heb. 3:12-14).
 - d) We are told that only FEW will make it. (Matt. 7:13-14)

V. RECEIVING THE PROMISE

A. God's promises are sure:

- 1) Even though only 2 out of that generation made it into Canaan—a whole new generation did make it.
- 3) He led them through the waters of the Jordan river into the land of Promise.
- 4) There, he gave them rest!

C. God's promises are sure for us today also!

- 1) Even though few will make it—that few will be rewarded.
- 2) God will lead us through the “Jordan of Death” to the other side.
- 3) He will safely lead us into our promised land—Heaven! (1 Cor. 2:9)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- 1. The Bible is one grand unit from beginning to end—all tied together as one.
- 2. It shows the greatness of God's wisdom & power to do what He planned to do.
- 3. His offer of deliverance & help for mankind should not go unheeded—He is able!

Lesson Four

“Man’s Need of Holiness to Approach God” (Leviticus)

Introduction

1. God is Holy—stated in both Old and New Testaments clearly!
 - a) Because He is Holy, man has a problem in approaching God.
 - b) Why? Because of his sinfulness—unholiness!
 - c) He needs cleansing, purification, sanctification in order to approach God.
 - d) Both Covenants stress this concept.
 - e) Leviticus is the Old Testament book that gives great stress to this.
2. There is a two fold emphasis:
 - a) Man, or that which man will use in his approach to God, just first be cleansed!
 - b) Then, that hallowedness must be respected—kept clean, holy, sanctified—not defiled.

Discussion**I. THE STRESS ON HOLINESS OR SANCTIFICATION.*****A. When the Tabernacle was erected, it was Hallowed by God’s presence.***

- 1) Exo. 40:33-35
- 2) But before God’s presence was there, something had to be done. (Exo. 40:9-11)

B. Priests who serve in the Holy Tabernacle must be sanctified.

- 1) Exo. 40:12-15
- 2) Before they could serve, they had to be cleansed. (Lev. 8:6, 12)

C. Even the Altar & Fixtures had to be sanctified.

- 1) Lev. 8:10-11, 14-15.

D. Even the Offerings upon the altar had to be special!

- 1) Lev. 1:3, 10; 22:20-24
- 2) Lev. 17:11

E. An example of the need for Sanctification in approaching God.

- 1) Lev. 10:1-2
- 2) Why? Verse 3
- 3) Exhortation... Verses 8-10

F. Summary:

- 1) God is Holy!
- 2) To approach unto Him requires Holiness—Sanctification!
- 3) The Place used is to be Holy! (Tabernacle)
- 4) The Objects used are to be Holy—Sanctified! (Altar, Laver, etc.)
- 5) And the ones who approach Him—the priests must be Holy—Sanctified!
- 6) Then, and only then, is man’s worship acceptable.

II. STRESS ON KEEP HOLY!***A. Holiness in one’s daily life!***

- 1) The priests were not to eat a holy thing in an unclean situation (Lev. 7:20-21)

- 2) The people in general were to stay holy by not eating unclean animals. (Lev. 11:44-45)
- 3) Even special purification rites were required for a woman who gave birth. (Lev. 12:2-5)
- 4) They were to abstain from eruptions that contaminate the body. (Leprosy, boils, eruptions) (Lev. 15:31)
- 5) Immorality of all kinds strongly condemned. (Lev. 18:29-30)
- 6) Special laws of purity were given to priests and their families.
 - a) Priest could only marry a virgin. (Lev. 21:14)
 - b) He could serve only if he himself had no blemish. (Lev. 21:17)
 - c) Not to defile himself when anointed. (Lev. 21:10-12)
- 7) The necessity to respect Hallowed things.
 - a) Lev. 22:1-2
 - b) Lev. 22:10
 - c) Lev. 26:2

B. What were they to do about SIN in their lives that affected their acceptability to God?

- 1) A blood atonement was necessary. (Lev. 17:11)
- 2) The Day of Atonement. (Lev. 16:15-16, 34)
- 3) The Scape Goat. (Lev. 16:21-22)
- 4) The whole sacrificial system....daily....means of daily cleansings.
- 5) Emphasis upon Sacrifice & Obedience.

III. APPLICATION FOR US TODAY

A. We need Holiness to approach unto God.

- 1) A sinful, impure, imperfect man cannot approach God without cleansing.
 - a) 1 Cor. 6:11
 - b) Heb. 13:12
 - c) Sinful man is not allowed into the presence of a Holy God. (Isa. 6:1-7).
- 2) We need cleansing by the blood of Jesus.
 - a) Accomplished by our obedience to the Gospel.
 - b) 1 Pet. 1:22; Acts 2:38

B. Daily cleansing is also necessary to keep our approach to God open.

- 1) 2 Tim. 2:21
- 2) 1 John 1:7-9
- 3) Emphasis upon Sacrifice & Obedience.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. Two important questions need to be asked:
 - a) Have we been cleansed, sanctified, purified upon our obeying the Truth?
 - b) Are we continuing to walk in the light, so that we might maintain that holiness and sanctification before God?
2. Without Holiness, no man shall see God!

Lesson Four

“Man’s Need of Holiness to Approach God” (Leviticus)

Introduction

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- 2) The people in general were to stay holy by not eating unclean animals. (Lev. 11:44-45)
- 3) Even special purification rites were required for a woman who gave birth. (Lev. 12:2-5)
- 4) They were to abstain from eruptions that contaminate the body. (Leprosy, boils, eruptions) (Lev. 15:31)
- 5) Immorality of all kinds strongly condemned. (Lev. 18:29-30)
- 6) Special laws of purity were given to priests and their families.
 - a) Priest could only marry a virgin. (Lev. 21:14)
 - b) He could serve only if he himself had no blemish. (Lev. 21:17)
 - c) Not to defile himself when anointed. (Lev. 21:10-12)
- 7) The necessity to respect Hallowed things.
 - a) Lev. 22:1-2
 - b) Lev. 22:10
 - c) Lev. 26:2

D. What were they to do about SIN in their lives that affected their acceptability to God?

- 1) A blood atonement was necessary. (Lev. 17:11)
- 2) The Day of Atonement. (Lev. 16:15-16, 34)
- 3) The Scape Goat. (Lev. 16:21-22)
- 4) The whole sacrificial system....daily....means of daily cleansings.
- 5) Emphasis upon Sacrifice & Obedience.

III. APPLICATION FOR US TODAY

C. We need Holiness to approach unto God.

- 1) A sinful, impure, imperfect man cannot approach God without cleansing.
 - a) 1 Cor. 6:11
 - b) Heb. 13:12
 - c) Sinful man is not allowed into the presence of a Holy God. (Isa. 6:1-7).
- 2) We need cleansing by the blood of Jesus.
 - a) Accomplished by our obedience to the Gospel.
 - b) 1 Pet. 1:22; Acts 2:38

D. Daily cleansing is also necessary to keep our approach to God open.

- 1) 2 Tim. 2:21
- 2) 1 John 1:7-9
- 3) Emphasis upon Sacrifice & Obedience.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. Two important questions need to be asked:
 - a) Have we been cleansed, sanctified, purified upon our obeying the Truth?
 - b) Are we continuing to walk in the light, so that we might maintain that holiness and sanctification before God?
2. Without Holiness, no man shall see God!

Lesson Five

“Man’s Journey to the Promise Land” (Numbers)

Introduction

1. Background:

- a) One of the better known stories in the Old Testament is of the 12 spies to spy out the land of Canaan.
 - b) 10 Spies bring back a bad report.
 - c) Joshua & Caleb try to overcome the evil report, but fail to convince people.
 - d) God’s threat to destroy the whole nation, but Moses intercedes for them.
 - e) God’s wrath stopped, but punishment still is threatened.
 - f) The whole generation (20 years and up) will not be allowed to enter promise land.
2. This & other well-known events took place as recorded in this 4th book of Moses (Numbers).
- a) Most of the events happened in the wilderness.
 - b) It briefly covers a period of about 38-40 years.
 - c) They numbered the men (20 years & up) at the beginning—603,550. (Ch. 1)
 - d) They numbered them at the end of the wilderness wanderings—601,730. (Ch. 26)

Discussion**I. PURPOSES OF THE BOOK OF NUMBERS*****A. Much of the book is historical in nature.***

- 1) From the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai unto their readiness to enter Canaan.
- 2) Reveals the dealings with a large number of people in the wilderness.

B. Instructions & Laws are also interwoven in History.

- 1) Gives special meaning to laws.
- 2) Much about Levites and their work.
- 3) Also, varied laws dealing with individuals.

C. Describes purification of a nation for God’s purposes.

- 1) They were a mixed people!
 - a) Problems with Idolatry, Immorality, Murmuring, Lack of Faith.
 - b) Inter-marriage with Egyptians???
 - c) Others came out of Egypt with them.
- 2) God had to:
 - a) Purify them;
 - b) Weld them into a nation that would believe & follow His commands.
- 3) This was done through teaching, miracles, and punishment for disobedience.
 - a) By stressing the certainty of God’s promises & threats;
 - b) By showing his daily care of them in the wilderness;
 - c) By His just judgments upon all.
- 4) At the end of 40 years of Training & Discipline:
 - a) The Nation was purified;
 - b) It was unified;
 - c) It was made ready to accomplish God’s purposes!
- 5) Some of the Special Events that helped to accomplish these purposes:

- a) Incident over murmuring for meat:
 - Tired of manna all the time.
 - They wanted meat.
 - God sent them meat...Quail in abundance.
 - But He also sent a plague among them.
- b) Evil report of 10 spies:
 - 10 spies were killed.
 - Moses' intercession for people helped to save them.
 - But that whole generation was not going to go into Canaan.
 - But their children would get to go in.
 - Num. 14:22-23
- c) The Rebellion of Korah:
 - Rebelled against God's appointed leader...Moses.
 - Korah & company were punished by the ground opening up and they went into the pit alive.
 - And also, Num. 16:49
- d) Fiery Serpents sent among them.
 - They were traveling around the borders of Edom.
 - *"the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way."*
 - They spoke against God & Moses.
 - The Lord sent fiery serpents among them.
 - They cried unto God—He heard—Provided relief.
 - When they were bit, they were to look upon a brazen serpent on a pole that Moses had been told to raise up.
 - Num. 21:8
- e) Idolatry in the plains of Moab.
 - Barak, King of Moab, had tried to get Balaam to curse God's people, but this failed.
 - But he learned that he could put a stumbling block in their way.
 - Through Harlotry & Idolatry, God punished them.
 - 24,000 were killed because of it.
- 6) Finally—after 38 years of this kind of activity:
 - a) They were cleansed;
 - b) They were ready to go in and possess the land.

II. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS BOOK:

A. There is a need for Orderliness in serving God.

- 1) It should not be left to chance, or someone's over-zealousness!
- 2) God gave strict orders & arrangements for all things.

B. Grave danger of murmuring about out lot in life.

- 1) It was a very hard lesson for them to learn to Trust in God.
- 2) They needed to be satisfied with the things God granted them.
 - a) Their murmuring showed their dissatisfaction.
 - b) God's punishment was to help the rest to understand.

- c) But they still did not learn the lesson time after time.
- 3) Murmuring is a lack of trust in God's promises.
- C. Leadership involves great burdens at times.**
 - 1) At one time in particular, Moses complained to God—Load too heavy!
 - 2) Numbers 11:10-15
 - 3) God provided 70 other men to help him bear burdens.
- D. Journey to the Promised Land was not easy!**
 - 1) Of all the history of Israel:
 - a) The New Testament quotes an awful lot from this period in the Wilderness.
 - b) The reason is obvious—it has great significance to us today.
 - c) Time and again the New Testament warns about the dangers of unbelief. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-12; Heb. 3:4, 7-12).
 - 2) The contrast helps us to see the obvious comparisons made:
 - a) Israel delivered from bondage in Egypt into Freedom—So are we delivered from the bondage of sin.
 - b) Israel was tested and tried in the wilderness wanderings—So are we tested and tried in this life.
 - c) Israel looked for the Promised Land at the end of their journey—So do we (heaven).
 - 3) Our journey towards heaven must be one of:
 - a) Hope
 - Temptations are on every side... must fix our hope on heaven
 - Hope grows stronger as we get closer.
 - Rom. 8:24
 - b) Faith
 - Heb. 11 is called the chapter on faith because of its emphasis!
 - It shows who will make it—***"The just shall live (survive) by faith"*** (Hab. 2:4)
 - 1 John 5:4
 - Unbelief is man's besetting sin.
 - It destroys us in our "wilderness."
 - Faith gives confidence to our direction.
 - c) It is a Journey of Joy
 - Jas. 1:2—There is no joy in the temptations, trials, or tribulations, but there is joy in the anticipation of the results of being faithful through trials. Heb. 12:2
 - Yes, the way is hard, but the reward is great—Joy of anticipation

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. Rev. 22:14
2. It is faithful, believing, obedient people who will enter heaven.
 - a) They are the ones who will successfully endure the wilderness temptations & trials.
 - b) They will enter into their Promised Land of Rest.
3. May all of us be found faithful on that day!

Lesson Six

“Lest We Forget” (Deuteronomy)

Introduction

1. Deuteronomy means “second law.”
 - a) It was a repeating of the Law again for the new generation coming on.
 - b) This was about 40 years later.
 - c) A favorite word in this book is **Remember!**
 - d) A favorite expression is **Lest we forget!**
2. Examples: Deut. 4:9, 23

Discussion**I. WHAT WERE THEY IN DANGER OF FORGETTING?**

A. Deut. 4:9—“Lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen.”

- 1) Deut. 11:7—“**But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which He did.**”
- 2) Wouldn’t you like to have been there—to see the sights they saw!
 - a) The Movie—**The Ten Commandments**, is an attempt to visualize some of what they saw.
 - b) It must have been awesome to see what they saw.
- 3) The nation had been miraculously delivered from Egypt:
 - a) 10 Great plagues came upon Egypt—but not on Israel.
 - b) Miraculous deliverance through the Red Sea.
 - c) The Awesome sights and sounds at Mt. Sinai.
- 4) Then—on top of that:
 - a) Being fed with Manna from on high each day for 40 years;
 - b) Be given water from the rocks...time and again;
 - c) Their clothes and shoes did not wear out for 40 years.
- 5) And—God had brought them to the place where they were ready to conquer Canaan.
 - a) They had already conquer King Og and King Sihon on the East side of Jordan.
 - b) Deut. 3:24
- 6) **DANGER**—Lest they forget these things they have seen and turn from God!

B. Deut. 4:23—“Lest you forget the Covenant of the Lord your God.”

- 1) What a great Covenant they had been given from God.
 - a) It was given through Moses at Mt. Sinai.
 - b) Written on 2 great tablets of stone by the hand of God.
 - c) A law that no other nation had like it.
- 2) Deut. 4:7-8; 8:11-14, 17-18
- 3) **DANGER**—Lest you forget what a great privilege to have such a great law and to enjoy a special relationship with God.

II. FORTUNATELY, THE NEW GENERATION DID NOT FORGET!***A. They had faith in what God could do through them.***

- 1) They went in and conquered Canaan and settled it.
- 2) All that generation remained faithful to God.
- 3) Joshua 24:31

B. But there came a generation that did forget!

- 1) Judges 21:25
- 2) The dangers are real.
- 3) Constant warnings were necessary.
- 4) And such warnings are needful for us today.

III. APPLICATION***A. Look at the history of what happened to the church.***

- 1) At first:
 - a) It was strong, faithful, evangelistic, and spread the gospel widely.
 - b) In about 30 years, it had spread to all "creation." (Col. 1:23)
 - c) For 300 years, the church basically continued faithful to God.
- 2) Then, they began to forget to whom they owed allegiance.
 - a) They began turning from the Word of God to the word of men.
 - b) More and more men usurped God's place. (2 Thess. 2:1-4)
 - c) They forgot...and the church went away into apostasy!
- 3) Finally, there was an effort to go back to the Bible—to God's Word!
 - a) A striving to return to give allegiance to God, not men.
 - b) This movement is identified as a Reformation Movement.
 - c) It was attempting to Reform that which was apostate.
 - d) This is never easy to do.
 - e) At first, much stress laid on returning to the Bible.
 - f) But Councils of men began dictating their creeds upon men again.
 - g) Thus, usurping the place of God again in the hearts of the people.
 - h) It was a turning from God's Word to the word of men again.
- 4) Then, another bright light begin to shine on the horizon.
 - a) Men begin advocating a Restoration.
 - b) To restore back to the original pattern that God had given.
 - c) To go all the way back beyond all the works of men to the original.
 - d) To turn away from the Creeds and Names of men.
 - e) To let God's Word be the full guide God intended.
 - f) These efforts have grown and spread all over the world.

B. But we face the same dangers today as Israel faced 3500 years ago.

- 1) We can again forget to whom we owe our allegiance. (2 John 9)
- 2) We can forget whose we are and to whom we belong. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
- 3) We can forget the need to speak as the oracles of God. (1 Pet. 4:11)
- 4) We can forget that men can lead us astray again from God. (2 Pet. 2:1)

C. Some critical questions for us to ponder:

- 1) Will there be strong preaching 50 years from now?
- 2) Will there be sufficiently strong spiritual leadership to keep the church faithful?

- 3) Will the church still be active in reaching out to the lost?
- 4) Will it still be active in helping to spread the gospel around the world?
- 5) Will our children be Christians, and our children's children?
- 6) God's warning to them needs to be taken to heart by us: Deut. 4:9, 8:2-4; 6:7-9

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. What we do now will affect the future of the church.
2. God wants his people to be faithful so he can bless them. (Deut. 5:29)
3. But He also knows man:
 - a) Thus, the reason for so much repetition of His will.
 - b) Repetition of the warnings not to forget it.
4. We need to profit from what God has recorded for our learning. (Rom. 15:4)

Lesson Seven

“I’ve Found a Hiding Place”

(Joshua)

Introduction

1. Some of the outstanding stories of the Old Testament come from the book of Joshua.
 - a) Conquest of Canaan
 - b) Walls of Jericho
 - c) The Long Day of Joshua
 - d) The Blessing and the Cursing
 - e) Cities of Refuse
 - f) Joshua’s challenge.... ***“Choose you this day whom you will serve....”***
2. Possibly the most impressive thing about the book is its relation to the New Testament.
 - a) Joshua, as a type of Christ.
 - b) Going into the Promise Land as a type of entering Heaven.
 - c) The warnings of God to His leader to take heed to His Word.

Discussion**I. MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK:*****A. Entrance into Canaan:***

- 1) God’s assurance that every where the soles of their feet shall tread will be given to them.
- 2) Spies are sent into Jericho to spy out the city.
- 3) The saving of Rahab’s people....She is in the lineage of the Messiah.
- 4) Crossing the Jordan in preparation for taking the city.

B. The Conquest of Canaan:

- 1) The taking of Jericho and Ai.
- 2) Conquest of Middle portion of Canaan.
- 3) Conquest of the Southern portion.
- 4) Conquest of the Northern portion.

C. The Portioning off of Canaan among the Tribes, the Levites, and special cities.

- 1) This was all laid out by God, but repeated again.
- 2) To be sure that every one got their portion of the land.
- 3) This all took about 7 years....estimate.

II. MIRACLES IN THE BOOK:***A. Drying up of the River Jordan for passage.***

- 1) Joshua 3:13-17
- 2) This was no longer an unusual event after what happened at the Red Sea.
- 3) But this was God’s assurance that He was with them.

B. Manna ceases after 40 years.

- 1) Joshua 5:12

C. The collapse of the walls of Jericho.

- 1) Joshua 6:20
- 2) Various attempts have been made to find evidence of what happened.

- 3) All evidence is in conformity to what the Bible says.
- D. *God used Hail-stones to help destroy the 5 kings' armies.***
- 1) Joshua 10:11
- E. *The extension of day light to help Joshua overthrow their enemies.***
- 1) Joshua 10:12-14
- 2) One of the most unusual events in Old Testament history.
- 3) The closest thing that corresponds to this was when the Sun Dial of Hezekiah moved back 10 degrees.
- F. *There are other indications that a great number of miracles were done during this time of conquest.***

III. NATIONS SUBDUED:

A. The extent:

- 1) 31 kings and nations are mentioned as having been overthrown.
- 2) There probably were a lot more smaller cities involved in the overthrow as well.
- 3) Small pockets of people were left in the land and not driven out.
- 4) The main opposition had been put down.
- 5) The Israelites could live in relative peace.
- 6) Some of the peoples were made tribute to Israel.

B. Joshua's leadership:

- 1) It is obvious that God spells out what makes a good leader for His people:
 - a) To be strong & courageous.
 - b) To be assured of God's presence & blessings.
 - c) Good knowledge of God's Word & abiding in it.
- 2) His leadership was so successful that:
 - a) The people followed his lead.
 - b) They were able to overthrow great nations—greater than they.
 - c) The people remained faithful to God.
- 3) Joshua is unique as a leader:
 - a) Many feel he is a type of Christ in many respect.
 - b) He led his people into the Promise Land—so does Christ.
 - c) His name in Greek is Jesus...Savior...he was that to Israel.

IV. SPECIAL REQUESTS BY GOD:

A. The Mount of Blessing & Cursing:

- 1) Joshua 8:30-35
- 2) These mountains were to be a continual reminder of God's promised blessings and cursings.
 - a) Blessings, if they would abide in His Word.
 - b) Cursings, if they failed to do so.
- 3) The people must have been impressed with this event.

B. Appointing Cities of Refuge

- 1) Joshua 20:1-7
- 2) They were especially designed to help the innocent of those who accidentally killed someone.

- 3) Such were allowed to enter cities to escape the avenger of blood.
- 4) Even if innocent—they had to stay in the city until death of a High Priest.
- 5) Name of cities:
 - a) Kadesh—Holy
 - b) Shechem—Pillar, Foundation
 - c) Hebron—Fellowship
 - d) Bezer—Strong, Fortress
 - e) Ramoth—Elevation, Height
 - f) Golan--Circle
- 6) These cities help to illustrate the church!
 - a) The church is God’s Holy dwelling place now.
 - b) It is built upon a sure foundation—Jesus Christ.
 - c) It offers sweet fellowship with God and one another.
 - d) It is a strong fortress against the onslaughts of the Evil One.
 - e) It is high and lifted up above the wickedness of this world.
 - f) We are complete in Christ, in His church—forgiveness of sin.
 - g) ***“I’ve found a hiding place”***—safety, security for my soul.
 - h) ***“What a blessing the church is for God’s people today”***—as well as for the world!

V. JOSHUA’S FAREWELL EXHORTATIONS:

A. At the outset:

- 1) An assurance that God was with them and would do great things with and through them. ***“the Lord will do wonders among you.”***
- 2) So act in faith, believing—fearing the Lord—that all the earth might know the mighty hand of the Lord among us.

B. At the end of the conquest:

- 1) He reminds them of what God had promised them.
- 2) For them not to waver in their faith in what God had promised.
- 3) Reminder that nothing of what God had promised to them had failed.

C. Final address:

- 1) Reminded them again of what God had done to all those nations.
- 2) Be strong & diligent to keep God’s Law.
- 3) Do not yield to the gods of nations about you. 2 Cor. 6:14-18
- 4) If you yield, God will drive you out as He did these nations.
- 5) Joshua 24:13-15

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- 1) Joshua’s impact upon the people was great & good & lasting. Joshua 24:31
- 2) God’s faithfulness emphasized and the need to serve God in sincerity & truth.

Lesson Eight

“God Provides Deliverers”

(Judges—Ruth)

Introduction

1. Sin Began among humans in the Garden of Eden, but it did not end there.
 - a) It became so dominant that God destroyed mankind in a great flood.
 - b) The Tower of Babel caused God to scatter and confuse their language.
 - c) God narrowed down his special working with mankind to one nation.
 - 1) But Israel sins greatly in their unbelief in the wilderness.
 - 2) After they finally conquered and settled Canaan, sinfulness became obvious again among them.
 - 3) During the period of the Judges, it was like a broken record—up & down.
 - 4) They served God a while and then went away from God.
 - 5) God would punished them and they would repented.
 - 6) God would show mercy, forgive, and restore them.
2. God’s love constantly provided deliverers for His sinful creatures.
 - a) Judges were deliverers (Judges 2:16).
 - b) When they came to their senses, they would cry to God, and He would send a deliverer
3. The Book of Ruth is also talking about deliverers.
 - a) It records the events that happened during the period of the Judges.
 - b) It tells of Naomi and her daughter-in-law (Ruth) and their plight.
 - c) She had no one to redeem her husband or sons’ property to carry on their name.
 - d) Boaz became their deliverer for their family to continue. (Ruth 4:15)
 - e) But it also points out that Ruth’s son, Obed, is in the descendency of the only true spiritual deliverer, Jesus, the Son of God.
4. God’s love and mercy is unlimited towards those that will turn to Him in submission & faith.

Discussion**I. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT JUDGES & RUTH*****A. Time covered by both books.***

- 1) Judges covers over 300 years (1444-1123 BC)
- 2) Ruth fits into this period of time about the time of Gideon (1227-1180 BC)
- 3) Covers six different periods of oppression.

B. Oppression by the Mesopotamians for 8 years

- 1) Delivered by Othniel, brother of Caleb.
- 2) Land had rest for 40 years.

C. Oppression by Moab for 18 years.

- 1) Delivered by Ehud and Shamgar (Over the Philistines)
- 2) Rest for 80 years

D. Oppression by the Canaanites for 20 years.

- 1) Delivered by Deborah and Barak.
- 2) Land had rest for 40 years.

E. Oppression by the Midianites for 7 years.

- 1) Delivered by Gideon.

- 2) Followed by his son, Abimelech...then Tola, Jair.
- 3) Land had rest for a total of 88 years.

F. Oppression by both the Ammonites & the Philistines.

- 1) The Ammonites oppressed them for 18 years.
 - a) Delivered by Jephthah.
 - b) He was followed by Ibzan, Elon, Abdon.
 - c) That part of Israel had rest from war for 31 years.
- 2) However, the Western part of Israel was oppressed by the Philistines for 40 years.
 - a) Samson served as a Judge during this time for 20 years.
 - b) He was not able to deliver them from the Philistines.
 - c) Eli was High Priest and judged in some sense during this time.
 - d) The wickedness of his sons showed the condition of the times.
 - e) Samuel evidently lived during the latter part of that 40 years.
 - f) He served as prophet and judge.
 - g) Under his leadership, the oppression of the Philistines was broken.
 - h) This was about 20 years after Samson's death. (1 Sam. 7:13)

II. DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES

A. Introduction (1:1-3:6)

- 1) Gives basis for the main part of the book.
- 2) General survey of whole period of time & conditions.
- 3) Shows Israel's failure to drive out all people.
- 4) Ends with God's reproof by an Angel of the Lord.
- 5) Gives Israel's attitude towards God...the results. (2:13-15)
- 6) The major part of the book illustrates these things.

B. History of the Judges (3:7-16:31)

- 1) Listing of oppressions.
- 2) Examples of Israel's rebellion & sins.
- 3) Shows Israel as a Nation of Tribal people.
 - a) The unity of the Nation was in its common place to worship.
 - b) When Idolatry came in strong—tended to destroy their unity.
 - c) Judges would help to turn them back to true worship...and unity.
- 4) Book of Judges—period of transition.
 - a) From Judges to a Monarchy, under a king. (Judges 17:6)

C. Appendage. (17:1-21:22)

- 1) Two separate stories are recorded to show conditions during the Judges.
 - a) Micah and his Idol...Idolatry of tribe of Dan.
 - b) Immorality of some in tribe of Benjamin...Almost destroyed by other tribes.
- 2) Reasons for believing these events happened during Judges (18:1; 1:34 20:28; 24:33)
- 3) They depict well the moral & religious conditions of the time.

III. LESSONS TO LEARN:

A. Disobedience to God brings consequences:

- 1) When Israel failed to drive out the people—the people became a snare to them.
 - 2) Sin, Disobedience to God will bring its consequences. (Gal. 6:7-8)
- B. *God's willingness to forgive the penitent.***
- 1) Even the most sinful can be forgiven.
 - 2) Even when Israel turned to idol gods, God would accept them back—if they repented.
 - 3) The impossibility to forgive on God's part is our lack of repentance. (Heb. 6:6).
 - 4) Our problem today is the same—can we be brought to repentance?
- C. *Our oneness as a people depends upon whom we worship.***
- 1) Israel's oneness was obvious as long as they worshipped the true God.
 - 2) Our oneness as a people depends upon whom we serve—God or self!
- D. *God's method of dealing with sinful man: Discipline, Mercy, Deliverance!***
- 1) God says sin brings its consequences.
 - 2) And yet, in spite of our sin, He is willing to show mercy & forgiveness.
 - 3) Discipline helps bring us to our senses.
 - 4) Then, we turn to God for mercy.
 - 5) It may take strong discipline some times to wake us up, but, if we will turn, He will be merciful.
 - 6) Isa. 55:6-7
- E. *Without proper leadership, everyone goes his own way. (Judges 17:6)***
- 1) When God would raise up a good leader for them it would unify their efforts and deliver them.
 - 2) We have a common leader—Jesus Christ.
 - a) We find unity and oneness in Him.
 - b) Eph. 2:16; Col. 2:10
- F. *God is able to use even the humblest when they willingly offer themselves to Him.***
- 1) Ruth, a Moabite, showed character and faith.
 - 2) She was humbly obedient according to God's will.
 - 3) She was rewarded by being in the descendency of Jesus Christ.
 - 4) If God could use such then, He still can today!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. God is willing to accept anyone, if they will turn to Him from their heart.
2. Let's put our full heart, soul, and mind into showing our love to God.

Lesson Nine

“Strong Back, But Weak Character”

(1 Samuel)

Introduction

1. One of the outstanding values of studying the Old Testament is:
 - a) To have portrayed good & bad characters;
 - b) Men and women of great faith & strength;
 - c) As opposed to those who do not have such.
2. The book, 1 Samuel, gets its name from one of the chief characters of the book.
 - a) But Samuel is only one of several persons that stand out.
 - b) The book portrays both good and bad characters.
 - c) Our main thrust of this study will be to learn lessons from these characters.

Discussion**I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION*****A. Historical sequence through books:***

- 1) **Judges**-----Over 300 years that God used Judges to help his people.
- 2) **1 Samuel**-----Transition from Judges to Kings over Israel (Saul is the 1st)
- 3) **2 Samuel**-----United Kingdom under David.
- 4) **1 Kings**-----Solomon as king—then, the kingdom divided.
- 5) **2 Kings**-----Kings of the Northern Kingdom and their fall in 722 B.C.
Kings of the Southern Kingdom and their captivity in 606 B.C.

B. Divisions of the Book of 1 Samuel:

- 1) **Chs. 1-7**—Career of Samuel
- 2) **Chs. 8-15**—Career of Saul up to his rejection.
- 3) **Chs. 16-31**—Career of Saul after his rejection.

C. Some Observations:

- 1) 1 Samuel is a phase-over book from Judges to Kings.
- 2) During the Judges:
 - a) Israel was largely independent tribes loosely federated.
 - b) Their unity was in the central place of worship.
- 3) Under Samuel:
 - a) The need for a king stressed by the people.
 - b) They wanted a centralized government with all the pomp & ceremony & power.
 - c) God gave them a king, but showed the dangers & weaknesses of such.
 - d) Later He used David as the good example of what kings should be like.

D. Special Events in the Book:

- 1) Story of Eli and his evil sons.
- 2) Birth & call of Samuel.
- 3) Anointing of Saul as first king.
- 4) Anointing of David to eventually succeed Saul.
- 5) Evils of jealousy as seen in Saul.
- 6) Respectfulness of David towards God’s anointed leader.
- 7) How a man’s attitude towards God and his servants make or mar his destiny.

8) How God uses both good and bad men to carry forward His purposes.

II. STUDY OF SIX CHARACTERS:

A. Hannah:

- 1) A godly & faithful woman.
- 2) Childless....great reproach to her.
- 3) Prayed earnestly for a son (1:10-11).
- 4) Her prayer was heard (1:24-28).
- 5) She evidently had an impact upon Samuel (2:26).
- 6) Woman of character, dependability, faith in God.

B. Samuel:

- 1) Was a Prophet, Priest, and Judge.
- 2) Primarily known as a Prophet (3:20).
- 3) Was dedicated to the Lord—lived up to that expectation.
- 4) His leadership became very pronounced among the people.
- 5) Main thrust was spiritual:
 - a) Called people to come out of Idolatry.
 - b) Helped them come to a true devotion to God (7:3-4).
 - c) Brought about strong religious reforms.
- 6) Helped to lead nation in their time of crisis with Philistines (7:13).
- 7) Known for his fairness, justness, and impartial dealings (12:3-5).
- 8) Enjoyed unquestioned confidence of people.
- 9) He had established centers where he could help the people: RAMAH, BETHEL, GILGAL, MIZPEH (7:16-17).
- 10) He also taught schools of prophets at these centers.
 - a) He sent them back to their homes to help the people.
 - b) One of the primary reasons for improved conditions spiritually.
- 11) Was greatly respected even unto his death (25:1).

C. Saul:

- 1) Anointed as first king.
- 2) Physical characteristics were outstanding (9:2).
- 3) Very modest and humble at first—he did not seek to be king (10:21-24; 15:17).
- 4) Was respectful of God's Prophet & of God's Will in his life.
- 5) Good leader, organized, able to execute his plans (14:47).
- 6) His successes began to turn his head.
- 7) Upon one occasion, he assumed a priestly role—openly disobedient to God.
 - a) He had a hard time facing up to his disobedience.
 - b) 15:11, 13-14, 23, 35.
- 8) From this time on—his remaining years were tragic:
 - a) Mind seems to have been affected by an evil spirit (16:14).
 - b) Soothing music seems to have helped—David employed to play.
 - c) But Saul became extremely jealous of David (18:8-9, 29).
 - d) Became morose, melancholy, and insanely jealous.
 - e) The Lord no longer spoke to Saul through any means (28:6).
 - f) His tragic end came from a spirit of rebellion & self-will.

- g) He reaped the bitter fruits of his own folly.
- h) He used his power for evil purposes—not righteous purposes.
- i) Instead of devoting himself to constructive planning for his kingdom—he wasted his time pursuing David to kill him (23:14; 26:21).

D. David:

- 1) His character developed carefully.
- 2) He was to replace Saul at the proper time.
- 3) His character was being refined for the great work ahead of him.
- 4) As a young man he was good looking (16:12).
- 5) Very brave & courageous (17:37, 45-47).
- 6) Behaved himself very wisely—even under trying circumstances (18:5).
- 7) Well received by the people (18:5, 7, 16).
- 8) Made a good & just leader (18:13).
- 9) Showed great respect for Saul as God's anointed—even though Saul had evil intent to kill him (24:10).
- 10) More information given in 2 Samuel.

E. Jonathan:

- 1) Known for his unselfish love for David:
 - a) Refused to be envious & jealous of him & his popularity.
 - b) He even knew that David would be the next king—not himself.
 - c) Truly a great spirit on his part (18:1, 3-4; 20:17).
- 2) He helped to save David's life that assured him he would not be king (19:1-2).
- 3) He was courageous—with great faith in God.
 - a) Single-handed, he went against a garrison of Philistines twice.
 - b) With God's help, he defeated them (14:45).
 - c) He died in battle later with his father & his people against the Philistines.

F. Abigail:

- 1) Married to Nabal—said to be a son of Belial (25:25).
- 2) David sent his men to request help of him, since they had provided protection.
- 3) Nabal refused and insulted David & his men.
- 4) David's anger stirred up—he was about to come down with men to destroy him.
- 5) But Abigail was wise—she was used by God to intervene and help David overcome his anger.
 - a) She went to David with gifts.
 - b) She persuaded him not to do this evil thing.
 - c) She showed respect for God and David.
 - d) She was a humble and kind person.
 - e) She was respected by her servants (25:23-26).
- 6) David was so impressed with her conduct and wise advice:
 - a) He listened and turned back from his plan.
 - b) And later, after her husband was struck dead, David married her.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. God's book reveals both the good & bad characters.
 - a) Some with strong backs but weak character.
 - b) But also, some with great courage, faith, and fidelity.
2. Great lessons can be learned from these people.
3. One thing for certain—God does not expect perfection out of His followers, But.....
 - a) He does want our hearts turned in sincerity to Him;
 - b) He does want us to be willing to confess our sins and turn from them;
 - c) He wants us to serve Him faithfully.

Lesson Ten

“The Beauty of God’s Forgiveness”

(2 Samuel)

Introduction

1. 2 Samuel is primarily the story of David as King over Israel.
 - a) He was possibly the strongest king Israel ever had.
 - b) All others were measured by him.
 - c) He had fine executive ability—JUST, FAIR, ORDERLY, EFFICIENT, ORGANIZED.
 - d) He evidently was a very skillful soldier and leader.
 - e) He was deeply religious.
2. We can see in the life of David:
 - a) True & genuine faith in God.
 - b) Gross imperfections as a human being at times!
 - c) Genuine repentance and desire for forgiveness.
 - d) Resigning to the suffering because of his sins.
 - e) A strong desire to maintain his relationship with God throughout his life.
 - f) The book of Psalms strongly reflect these things!
3. The book is divided into four parts:
 - a) David becomes king (1-7).
 - b) Expansion of kingdom (8-10).
 - c) Grievous sins & consequences (11-20).
 - d) Miscellaneous (21-24).

Discussion**I. DAVID ESTABLISHED AS KING. (1-7)*****A. Death of Saul & Jonathan in battle with Philistines.***

- 1) 1 Samuel ended with the victory of the Philistines over Israel.
- 2) It briefly describes the death of Saul & Jonathan.
- 3) Now, 2 Samuel opens with a continuation of the outcome of the battle.
- 4) David laments greatly over Saul & Jonathan’s death.

B. David begins his 40 year reign as king.

- 1) At first, only Judah accepted him as king.
 - a) This continued for a little over 7 years.
 - b) War between Judah & Israel during this time.
 - c) Abner, the general of Israel’s army, capitulates to David.
 - d) Ishbosheth is murdered.
 - e) After this, all the tribes come together & anoint David as king.
- 2) David was 37 years old at this time and died at 70.
- 3) He sought for a good location more centrally located for his capital.
 - a) Decides on Jerusalem.
 - b) It is taken from the Amorites and made his capital.
- 4) Next, the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem.
- 5) The city was fortified.
- 6) A beautiful house was built for David.
- 7) But David had a greater desire to build a house for the Lord.

- a) Plans were made.
- b) He begins collecting things together for the work
- 8) One scholar locates the Temple built later on the plot of ground David had bought from Arunah for sacrificing.

C. Possibly most significant passage is 2 Samuel 7:12-16 with a 3-fold emphasis:

- 1) You will have a son to succeed you on the throne;
- 2) He will build the Lord's house;
- 3) This will be an everlasting kingdom.
- 4) Some seems to fit Solomon—and some fits Christ.

II. DAVID'S CONQUEST & EXPANSION OF HIS KINGDOM. (8-10)

A. Conditions at the time David became king:

- 1) The Philistines had made some inroads into Judah.
- 2) The Canaanites still had quite a bit of coastal land.
- 3) Other nations around them continually gave problems.

B. Extent of his expansion of territory:

- 1) With God's blessings, the kingdom came to great heights of power and expansion during David's reign.
- 2) The Philistines were overthrown and pushed back into the coastal area.
- 3) The Canaanites were overthrown.
- 4) Moab was made tributary.
- 5) Zobah was made tributary.
- 6) Syria was made tributary.
- 7) Hamath voluntarily became tributary.
- 8) Ammon became tributary.
- 9) Amalek became tributary.
- 10) Edom became tributary.

C. Key passages:

- 1) 2 Sam. 8:6—*"And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went."*
- 2) 2 Sam. 8:15—*"David executed judgment and justice unto all his people."*
- 3) 2 Sam. 9:7—*"Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."*

III. DAVID'S GRIEVOUS SINS & CONSEQUENCES. (11-20)

A. The Sins:

- 1) While the army was out fighting, David stayed home.
- 2) One evening he walked outside to sit on the house top in the cool of the evening.
- 3) He saw a beautiful woman bathing—How discreet was she??
- 4) He saw, he lusted, he sent for her.
- 5) After committing fornication, he later found she was going to have a child.
- 6) He had her husband called home from war to try to cover up his sin.
- 7) It didn't work.
- 8) David had Joab to put him into the hottest of the battle & withdraw from him.

B. The disappointment:

- 1) These are not unusual sins for ungodly men.
- 2) But for one that had tried to live right—a terrible disappointment.
- 3) We would not have expected such from David.
- 4) We expected better things.

C. The confrontation:

- 1) The Prophet Nathan confronts David with his sin—***“Thou art the man!”***
- 2) Even though he was king, he was not above God’s law.
- 3) The grievousness of the sin is expressed in (12:10)—***“Thou hast despised me.”***
 - a) God’s will, His Law, His Desire was put aside.
 - b) God calls this despising Him!
- 4) Terribleness also seen in (12:7-8).

D. Forgiveness:

- 1) 12:13
- 2) This was a death offense according to the Law.
- 3) But God overruled and allowed him to live—forgave him his sins.
- 4) But he did not take away the consequences that followed.

E. Consequences:

- 1) Part of the consequence—the baby dies.
 - a) The innocent suffer for sins of others.
 - b) The baby dies in a state that is safe—blessed.
 - c) The stigma that it would have had is lifted.
 - d) It is more of a punishment to the parents.
- 2) Problems in his house from here on:
 - a) Amnon (a son) falls in love with a half-sister (TAMAR) and rapes her, despises her, and sends her away.
 - b) Absalom (Tamar’s brother) waits his opportunity to revenge his sister.
 - Two years later, he kills Amnon.
 - He flees to another area of the country from his father, David.
 - Later, after 3 years, he is recalled.
 - c) The plotting of Absalom’s rebellion against his father to take the kingdom from him was short lived.
 - He is killed in battle.
 - David’s bitter cry: ***“O Absalom, my son, Absalom, would that I had died in your stead.”***
- 3) But this was not the end of his problems.
 - a) Sheba revolts and tries to take the 10 tribes with him.
 - b) He was pursued quickly and put to death to stop the problem.
 - c) David again restored as king—division of kingdom forestalled.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS. (21-24)**A. *During David's reign was a 3-year famine.***

- 1) He inquired of the Lord.
- 2) It was punishment for what Saul had done to the Gibeonites.
- 3) Seven of the sons of Saul were hanged as compensation for what Saul had done.
- 4) The famine ended.

B. *David's Song of Deliverance.***C. *The Mighty Men around David listed.*****D. *David yields to sin again and numbers Israel.***

- 1) He is given a choice of 3 things:
 - a) 7 years of famine;
 - b) Flee before enemies for 3 months;
 - c) 3 days' pestilence from the Lord.
- 2) David's choice: (24:14).
 - a) David buys property from Arunah and offers burnt offering.
 - b) Plague was stopped.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. It is important for us to realize that Israel's greatest king was not whitewashed!
 - a) In spite of our goodness, we are all still sinners saved by God's grace.
 - b) And we all continually need God's forgiveness.
2. Through David's example, we can find hope for our own forgiveness.
 - a) We can truthfully say in the words of the song: "*Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve—O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*"
 - b) We have seen the "Beauty of God's forgiveness."

Lesson Eleven

“From Great Glory to Great Shame”

(1 Kings)

Introduction

1. 1 Kings is a continuation of the history from 1 & 2 Samuels.
2. The period of time covered by this book is about 130 years (from the death of David to the death of King Ahab of the Northern Kingdom).
3. The theme is leadership of various kings & prophets and the division of the kingdom.
4. The major characters are Solomon and Elijah.
5. The problems:
 - a) How to successfully deal with God’s blessings!
 - b) How to deal with evil rulers of the people!
 - c) God’s people didn’t do too well with either of these!

Discussion**I. EVENTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST IN 1 KINGS*****A. Solomon’s wisdom:***

- 1) Shown in his deciding between two women about a baby (3:16-28).
- 2) It spread over the world (4:29-34).
- 3) The Queen of Sheba’s reactions to it (10:1-29) (verse 7)

B. The building of the Temple and Solomon’s house:

- 1) Began in 4th year of his reign (6:1).
- 2) Finished in 11th year of his reign (6:38).
- 3) His house took 13 years.

C. The dedication of the Temple:

- 1) Multitude of sacrifices.
- 2) Solomon’s great prayer.
- 3) The glory of God fills the Temple.
- 4) A Great Truth is recognized by Solomon (8:27).

D. Solomon’s greatness & shameful fall:

- 1) Multitude of foreign wives.
- 2) They turned his heart from God.
- 3) He was warned of God, but to no avail.
- 4) Success went to his head!

E. Division of the kingdom:

- 1) Ten tribes went with Jeroboam.
- 2) Judah and miscellaneous went with Rehoboam.
- 3) Jeroboam turns the people to Idolatry.
- 4) The great wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel.
- 5) Elijah’s efforts to bring the people back to God.

II. OUTLINE OF 1 KINGS:***A. David’s final acts & death (1:1-2:11)***

- 1) Adonijah’s efforts to take the throne. (1:1-10)
- 2) David chooses Solomon (1:11-2:9).

3) David's death (2:10-11).

B. Reign of Solomon (2:12-11:43)

1) Solomon's throne established (2:12-4:34).

2) Temple & house erected (5:1-8:66).

3) Solomon's great glory & fall (9:1-11:43).

C. Rebellion of Israel (12:1-16:29)

1) Rehoboam's actions (12:1-19).

2) Jeroboam made king over 10 tribes (12:20-24).

3) Kings under the divided kingdom (12:25-16:29).

D. The Work of Elijah under King Ahab (17:1-22:53)

1) God's punishment of Israel by a drought (17:1-24).

2) Efforts to stamp out Idolatry at Mt. Carmel (18:1-46).

3) God's efforts to bless Ahab (19:1-20:43).

4) Naboth's vineyard taken (21:1-29).

5) Ahab's death & successor (22:1-43).

III. SOLOMON, THE WISEST MAN THAT HAS EVER LIVED.

A. Demeanor:

1) He did not put himself forward to be king, but was chosen by David.

2) He thought of himself as unable to rule well without God's help—humility.

3) He dealt justly with Adonijah and others.

4) He loved the Lord (3:3).

B. His Exaltation:

1) God gave him a choice, and he chose Wisdom (3:28).

a) He made the greater choice & got far more than he asked.

b) He was given wisdom above all other men—mentioned by name.

c) His wisdom helped him to gain far more: Riches, Power, prestige.

2) Gold, Silver, Precious Stones abounded in Israel.

3) He had a most gorgeous house that took 13 years to build.

4) Peace was given him most of his reign—Alliances with nations.

C. His Fall:

1) Solomon was given wisdom, wealth, and power.

2) He was able to make peace with nations about him.

3) He loved God and wanted to serve Him and His people.

4) He was able to bring glory to God among the nations (10:23-24).

5) But in spite of all of this, HE FELL!

6) The cause of His fall:

a) Disobedience to God in marrying foreign wives.

b) They turned his heart from God to Idols (11:4-8).

c) He continued in disobedience after being warned twice by God (11:9-13).

7) A great shame—for one to begin so promising, but to fall so low.

8) **Lessons:**

a) Great wisdom does not assure man he will do right before God.

b) Even the most promising can fall from God.

c) God's people can bring great glory to God or great shame.

- 9) Solomon finally became a tyrant:
 - a) He robbed the people of their money & liberty.
 - b) He robbed them of their spiritual freedom as well.

IV. WHAT SOLOMON SET INTO MOTION:

A. He had set the seeds for division to be sown.

B. Kings that followed in Judah & Israel:

- 1) **Judah:**
 - a) Rehoboam (ungodly)
 - b) Abijam (ungodly)
 - c) Asa (godly)
 - d) Jehosphat (godly)
- 2) **Israel:**
 - a) Jeroboam (ungodly)
 - b) Nadab (ungodly)
 - c) Baasha (ungodly)
 - d) Elah (ungodly)
 - e) Zimri (ungodly)
 - f) Omri (ungodly)
 - g) Ahab (ungodly)
 - h) Ahaziah (ungodly)

V. ELIJAH, ISRAEL'S HOPE OF RETURN TO GOD.

A. Condition of the prophets of God:

- 1) Many slain, except for about 100 that were preserved by hiding them.
- 2) Been trained to teach & speak God's truth to the people.
- 3) Most of the prophets had gone over to the worship of Baal.
- 4) Elijah was the special one through whom God spoke to Ahab.

B. Miracles that Elijah performed:

- 1) The drought brought on and ended.
- 2) The multiplying of the widow's oil.
- 3) Raising of Widow's son—she was not an Israelite.
- 4) Contest on Mt. Carmel—consuming of offering by fire from heaven.
 - a) Killing of Prophets of Baal.
 - b) Israel acknowledges Jehovah as God.

C. Elijah's inner struggles:

- 1) He was most of the time running in fear of his life.
- 2) God helps him to escape.
- 3) He finally has to flee from Jezebel at God's directions—far away.
- 4) He feels sorry for himself (19:10-18).
- 5) Elisha is called to encourage & support him, and to succeed him.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. Great food can come from a man who serves God faithfully.
2. But at the same time, great evil & ruin can follow when such a person turns from God.
3. God does not cast off His people without making a great effort to get them back.
 - a) Jeroboam was told, ***“If you will serve me, I will greatly bless you.”***
 - b) Ahab was possibly the worse of the kings that followed, but God forgave and blessed him when he repented.
 - c) He sent His prophets to try to call men to repentance.
4. God is actively working among men today to bring us to Himself.
5. We need to put ourselves in God’s hands and be faithful to the end.

Lesson Twelve

“Punishment for Sin is Sure!”**(2 Kings)**Introduction

1. 2 Kings continues the historical narrative from 1 Kings at the time of the death of Ahab, king of Israel.
2. The book covers a period of about 300 years—down to the captivity of Judah by Babylonia.
3. Outline of 2 Kings:
 - a) **Chs. 1-8:**
 - Deals primarily with the work of Elijah & Elisha in the Northern Kingdom.
 - Their diligent efforts of trying to save them from destruction.
 - b) **Chs. 9-17:**
 - Work of Jehu & his descendants on the throne of Israel.
 - The Fall of Samaria, the capital of Israel.
 - The dispersion of Israel by the Assyrians.
 - c) **Chs. 18-25:**
 - Deals primarily with the good kings of Judah until their overthrow.
 - God’s prophets that were sent to help the kings save Judah.
 - But because of gross sins, God allowed Babylonia to take them captive.
4. Our study will be around 5 characters.

Discussion**I. ELISHA*****A. Elijah was still alive at this time.***

- 1) Rebukes Ahab’s son, Ahaziah, the new king for turning to Baal.
- 2) Elijah is taken up by God in a whirlwind.
- 3) His mantle falls upon Elisha, so he will continue the work.

B. God performs miracles through Elisha to help the people know he speaks for God.

- 1) Healing of bad waters (2:19-22).
- 2) Cursing of disrespectful children (2:23-24).
- 3) His prophesy of victory over Moab and means of securing water (3:4-27).
- 4) Multiplying of widow’s oil to pay her debt (4:1-7).
- 5) Promised conception to barren woman (4:8-17).
- 6) Raising of son back to life (4:18-37).
- 7) His miracle before the prophets—mess of pottage tainted (4:38-44).
- 8) Multiplying of bread (4:42-44).
- 9) Curing of Naaman’s leprosy (5:1-14).
- 10) Servant of Elisha stricken with leprosy for his wrong (5:20-27).
- 11) The axe head that floated (6:1-6).
- 12) Elisha knows plans of Syrians and makes known to King of Israel (6:8-23).
- 13) God’s deliverance of city of Samaria—Elisha’s prophecy (7:1-20).
- 14) Elisha prophesies of Hazael becoming king of Syria and the great evil he will do to Israel (8:7-15).

C. In Spite of all these miracles—Israel's leaders and people went further away.

- 1) But God could not cast off His people without an effort to save them.

II. JEHU***A. God sets up a new dynasty over Israel through Jehu.***

- 1) He promises him that his descendants will sit on his throne through 4 generations.
- 2) In spite of the evil they did, God carried out His promise.

B. God had a purpose for Jehu:

- 1) Primary (9:6-7).
- 2) Fulfilling purpose (10:10-11, 16-17).
- 3) Secondary purpose was to destroy Baal worship in Israel (10:18-19, 28).
- 4) God's promise to Jehu (10:30-31).
- 5) Jehu in all his brutality was God's executioner, punisher of the guilty.
- 6) Sin brings its punishment.

III. HEZEKIAH***A. Several kings had reigned before him that had been good.***

- 1) Joash helped to put Baal worship out of the Temple that Athaliah had put in.
- 2) Jehoash tried to keep people in the right paths.
- 3) Amaziah also tried to keep people in right paths.
- 4) Azariah also did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.
- 5) Jotham also followed that which was right in the sight of the Lord.
- 6) Ahaz became the exception in this line of good kings (16:2-4).

B. Hezekiah begins the reversal back to God again.

- 1) Even though he probably made some mistakes in judgment upon the advice of his advisors...his faith shines through very clearly in crucial times.
- 2) Judah had rebelled against Assyria—they would not pay tribute!
- 3) Assyria came down to punish Judah:
 - a) They take many of the walled cities in Judah.
 - b) They besiege Jerusalem and warn them to capitulate.
 - c) No other gods had been able to protect people they had overthrown.
 - d) Neither will your God!
- 4) Hezekiah goes to God in prayer and seeks out the prophet Isaiah also.
 - a) He is reassured by the prophet and by God (19:32-35; 2 Chron. 32:23).
 - b) During this time, he had a sickness and thought he would die.
 - c) He prayed earnestly to God for life.
 - d) God granted him 15 more years.
 - e) He was one of the great kings of Judah—seeking after God's will.

IV. MANASSEH***A. His background:***

- 1) He was only 12 years old when he began to reign.
- 2) He may have overlapped his father in his reign as a son in his old age.

- 3) He may not have been witness to the great events in the recent past—he may have only heard about them.

B. *His wickedness in the first part of his reign (21:2-9, 16).*

- 1) How could the son of such a righteous king turn and do such things.
- 2) Can a man be outstanding in other areas of righteousness and fail with his children?
- 3) Not the first of such that we have seen: Eli, Samuel, David, Solomon, etc.

C. *His repentance.*

- 1) He was allowed to be taken captive to Babylon.
- 2) While there, he came to his senses, repented and sought mercy of God. (2 Chron. 33:11-13).
- 3) God's grace and mercy is abundant, even on great sinners!

V. JOSIAH

A. *A king who really desired to seek after the Lord and His Will.*

- 1) In his 16th year, he began to earnestly seek after the Lord.
- 2) In his 20th year, he began purging Judah and Jerusalem of the idolatry and rebellion against God.
- 3) Upon finding the book of the Law in the Temple and reading it:
 - a) He called the people together;
 - b) Read it to them;
 - c) Drew up an agreement for them to serve the Lord according to the Law.
- 4) In his efforts to stamp out idolatry:
 - a) He did not stop in Judah & Jerusalem.
 - b) He broke down the altar and golden calf at Bethel.
 - c) He went as far as Samaria putting down altars and idols.
 - d) He destroyed the house of the Sodomites that were near the Temple.
 - e) He defiled the valley of Hinnom (Later used by Jesus as a place of punishment).

B. *His great reforms were not all negative.*

- 5) He instituted the revival of keeping God's commandments.
- 6) The newly observing of the Passover was quite a thing to be remembered (23:25).

C. *But unfortunately, his reforms did not last.*

- 1) Upon his death, the people went right back to their former practices.
- 2) Brought on quickly their punishment by God—captivity by Babylonia.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. God's concern for his sinful people:
 - a) He could have forgotten about them in their sins.
 - b) He could have let their sins destroy them without any effort on His part.
 - c) But He sent prophet after prophet to them.
 - d) He had miracles performed before them.
 - e) He chastised them for their sins and then offered to forgive them, if they would repent.

- f) He wants man to do right and be saved.
2. The great influence of men.
 - a) All have influences—some far more than others.
 - b) How would you like to be known as a negative person—against things.
 - c) When it is an evil influence, he has far reaching effects—may never undo (Jeroboam).
 - d) Good can also help people—it is far reaching as well.
 - e) Lives of the kings illustrate such.
 3. Outward change is not enough.
 - a) We can do away with idols and altars.
 - b) But, if the heart is not changed, the people will go back to them the first opportunity.
 4. God's chastisement can be severe.
 - a) Both Israel and Judah were severely overrun by their enemies.
 - b) Thousands were killed or carried away captive.
 - c) But, when that will not work—stronger measures still are called for—and they came.
 5. God remembers His promises.
 - a) His promise to David of one to sit on his throne.
 - b) To preserve a remnant of His people.
 - c) To bring the Messiah into the world, etc.
 6. God's greatest glory is in man's weakness.
 - a) When Hezekiah and Judah saw they were helpless, they called upon God.
 - b) In their weakness, they could realize their need for help.
 - c) God lends a hand and delivers them out of trouble—proving His power.

Lesson Thirteen

“Daring Examples”Introduction

1. At this time, God’s people had been decimated, scattered, and in captivity.
 - a) The Babylonians had taken them captive.
 - b) But the Medo-Persian Empire had arisen to conquer Babylon.
 - c) Cyrus allowed for a return of captives to their homeland.
 - d) But in particular...special provisions for the Jews.
 - A decree was given for them to go back home and rebuild the Temple.
 - Ezra 1:1-4
 - There were sufficient people who were willing to go back.
 - But they needed Daring Leaders to lead a Daring People to get the job done.
 - Under the first return—50,000 came back under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua.
2. Rebuilding was a slow process.
 - a) It wasn’t until the 7th month that an Altar was built to begin the daily & special sacrifices.
 - b) Several months later, they finally begin building on the Temple.
 - c) The foundation was completed.
 - It was a time of rejoicing, but sadness as well.
 - Many could still remember the former glory of the Old Temple.
 - d) They were hindered by neighbors for 14 years from doing any more building.
 - e) Finally, they were sent two prophets from God encouraging them to finish.
 - f) They finished it in 516 B.C. (about 20 years after returning).
3. But this was not the end of the problems these Jews would face.
 - a) Opposition continued for years later to their efforts.
 - b) This is the reason why we have entitled our lesson: **“Daring Examples.”**
 - c) They needed such leadership to survive, much less to go forward.

Discussion**I. DARING EXAMPLE OF QUEEN ESTHER*****A. These events happened during the reign of Xerxes (486-465 B.C.)***

- 1) Haman had been elevated to a very high position next to the king.
 - a) But his joy was mixed with unpleasantness.
 - b) Mordecai, a Jew, had been a real thorn in his side—he hated him.
- 2) Haman devised a plan to deal with Mordecai.
 - a) But also, the whole Jewish race.
 - b) He secured the king’s permission deceptively.
 - c) To have all the Jews throughout his kingdom to be slain on a certain day.
- 3) Esther, a Jewish young woman, had just recently been appointed the new Queen.
 - a) She, and her uncle Mordecai, realized something had to be done.

- b) He tried to convince her to speak to the King in their behalf.
- c) Esther 4:11-16

B. The Daring Example of Esther:

- 1) She took her life in her hands and went into the King's court uninvited.
 - a) Don't you know her heart was beating faster & faster.
 - b) Not knowing what awaited her—whether the King would let her live or die.
- 2) Fortunately, he invited her to come up and make her request.
- 3) Because she dared to be courageous & brave:
 - a) Her life was spared & exalted.
 - b) Her people's lives were spared, and exalted among all peoples.
 - c) Many people became Jews because of what took place.
 - d) Her uncle, Mordecai, was greatly exalted in the Empire also.
- 4) Many good things came about—because she dared to step out of faith in God.
- 5) Esther 10:2-3

II. THE DARING EXAMPLE OF NEHEMIAH

A. These events happened during the reign of Exerxes's son, Artaxerxes (465-423 BC)

- 1) In fact, it was about 35 years after the incident with Esther (444 BC).
- 2) The Temple had been rebuilt almost 100 years before this.
- 3) Their efforts at rebuilding Jerusalem were besought with great struggles.
- 4) Neh. 1:1-4
 - a) Nehemiah was greatly concerned, but what could he do?
 - b) He was Cupbearer to the king—He held a grave responsibility.
 - c) He couldn't just leave, but something needed to be done.

B. His daring courage to make his request of the king.

- 1) As he went in to serve the king—his countenance showed a problem.
- 2) At the king's request, he explained (2:1-2).
- 3) But in spite of his fears, he dared to speak up for the good of his people.
 - a) He requested to be allowed to go back and help his people.
 - b) The king allowed him to go back.
 - c) Also gave him all the authority, money, and help he would need.

C. His daring Courage was seen in many additional things.

- 1) After arriving in Jerusalem:
 - a) He was able to convince his people of what needed to be done.
 - b) He offered them a plan to get it done.
- 2) In spite of great hindrances—that required great courage—the job was finished.
- 3) But his people needed more than a wall about their city:
 - a) They had spiritual problems, financial problems, marital problems.
 - b) He set an example of unselfishness & liberality to help the poor.
 - c) He insisted on the leaders putting away their foreign wives.
 - d) He put foreigners out of the Temple services.
 - e) He caused the gates of Jerusalem to be closed on the Sabbath.
- 4) Because he dared to care enough to do something:
 - a) Much good came to God's people.

- b) Spiritual reforms were accomplished that lasted until time of Christ.

III. THE DARING EXAMPLE OF EZRA

A. The date for the events of Ezra is just before & during the time of Nehemiah.

- 1) Ezra 7:6-7
- 2) Date would be about 457 B.C.
- 3) God's people greatly needed to be taught & understand the Law of God.
- 4) Ezra 7:10
- 5) Someone had to care enough to do something about it—Ezra did!

B. He dared to do something about a grave need.

- 1) Required great effort to study day & night to prepare himself.
- 2) He had to seek out the ways to teach God's law.
- 3) He even dared to go back to Jerusalem with a large group to teach there.
- 4) Ezra 7:11-13
- 5) His faithfulness to God had prepared him for a great opportunity.
- 6) Special Note:
 - a) Ezra is believed to be the one who gathered all the sacred writings together.
 - b) And placed them in the form that was used in Jesus' day.

C. Ezra had the courage to lead a group of people back to Jerusalem.

- 1) It would take about 4 months.
- 2) It would be a great hardship on the way—threat of death by robbers.
- 3) But they all went on faith (Ezra 8:21-23).

D. He dared to undertake the task of re-educating the people according to God's Law.

- 1) Daily reading of Scriptures to them.
- 2) Making copies available for others to help teach them too.
- 3) But also efforts had to be made that required application of that teaching.
 - a) Putting away of foreign wives.
 - b) Adhering to all that God commands the priests, people, and rulers.
- 4) Because he dared to set his heart to seek God & teach His Law:
 - a) Much good came to God's people.
 - b) Pure worship & practice in their lives resulted.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- 1. Because these three had the courage to do what they saw needed to be done:
 - a) Their lives have been recorded to honor them by God.
 - b) They served as examples for their brethren to follow—and it did influence them.
 - c) They should serve for our imitating as well.
- 2. We need courageous people today:
 - a) Who will dare to do great things for God.
 - b) Who will exemplify the courage needed.
 - c) Who will care enough for the work of God & His people.
- 3) Whether we are young or old, single or married, rich or poor:
 - a) Our lives can be a blessing to others.
 - b) We can be a valuable tool in the hands of our God.

- c) Our lives can make a difference in our world.
 - d) Esthers, Ezras, and Nehemiahs are still greatly needed today.
- 4) Is your life counting for something worthwhile?

BRIEF OUTLINE OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

By Richard Rogers

THE LAW: THE FOUNDATION FOR CHRIST

Genesis: The Election of the Nation (12:1-3)
 Exodus: The Redemption of the Nation (4:22-23)
 Leviticus: The Sanctification of the Nation (19:2)
 Numbers: The Direction of the Nation (10:13)
 Deuteronomy: The Instruction for the Nation (30:15-16)

HISTORY: THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST

Joshua: The Possession of the Nation (11:23; 21:43)
 Judges: The Oppression of the Nation (2:11-23)
 Ruth: The Devotion Within the Nation (1:15-18)
 1 Samuel: The Stabilization of the Nation (13:14)
 2 Samuel: The Expansion of the Nation (7:12-16)
 1 Kings: The Deterioration of the Nation (11:1-13)
 2 Kings: The Deportation of the Nation (24:1-4)
 1 & 2 Chronicles: The History of the Nation (repeated) (7:11-18)
 Ezra: The Restoration of the Nation (1:1-4)
 Nehemiah: The Reconstruction of the Nation (4:6)
 Esther: The Preservation of the Nation (4:14)

POETRY: ASPIRATION FOR CHRIST

Job: Aspiration for Mediation by Christ (9:33)
 Psalms: Aspiration for Communion with Christ (23:1-6)
 Proverbs: Aspiration for Wisdom in Christ (8:1-11, 22-31)
 Ecclesiastes: Aspiration for the Highest Good in Christ (12:13)
 Song of Solomon: Aspiration for Marital Bliss in Christ (2:16; 6:3; 7:10)

PROPHECY: EXPECTATION OF CHRIST

Isaiah: Virgin-born (7:14); Smitten-Lamb, Suffering Servant (Ch. 53)
 Jeremiah: The Good Shepherd (23:4); The Lord, our Righteousness (23:6)
 Lamentations: Smitten and Insulted (3:30)
 Ezekiel: The Glory of God (Chs. 1, 43)
 Daniel: The Anointed One (9:26)
 Hosea: The Offended yet Compassionate Lover (11:4)
 Joel: The Refuge to His People (3:16)
 Amos: The Tabernacle of David (9:13)
 Obadiah: The Lord of the Kingdom (v. 21)
 Jonah: The Lord of the Nations (3:4)
 Micah: The Ruler in Israel (5:2)
 Nahum: The Jealous God (1:2)
 Habakkuk: The Holy One (1:12)
 Zephaniah: The Witness against the Nations (3:8)
 Haggai: The Restorer of Lost Glory (1:7-9)
 Zechariah: The Fountain of Cleansing (Ch. 13)
 Malachi: The Son of Righteousness (4:2)

