

Old Testament Stories

For Levels 15 - 18

As told by
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ELIJAH, THE PROPHET OF GOD

I Kings 16 & 17

In our last lessons we learned that God divided David's kingdom because of Solomon's sins and gave ten tribes to Jeroboam. The ten tribes became known as Israel or the northern kingdom. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, ruled over two tribes, known as Judah or the southern kingdom. Rehoboam and Jeroboam led the people away from God to serve idols.

This is a List of the first kings who ruled over the two nations and the number of years each one ruled.

United Israel

SAUL (40 years)

DAVID (40 years)

SOLOMON (40 years)

Divided Kingdom

JUDAH

Rehoboam (17 years)

Abijah (3 years)

Asa (41 years)

Jehoshaphat (25 years)

ISRAEL

Jeroboam (22 years)

Nadab (2 years)

Baasha (24 years)

Elah (2 years)

Zimri (7 days)

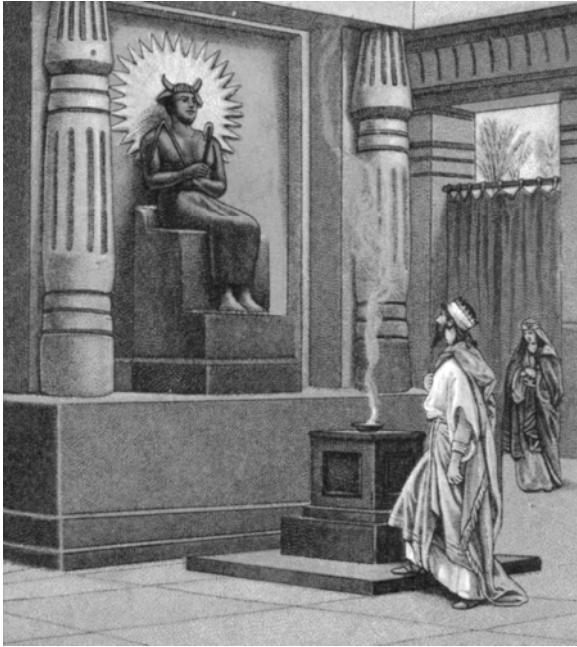
Omri (12 years)

Ahab (22 years)

The nations of Israel and Judah were at war for a great many years. Israel was ruled by men of many families. These men were evil and usually became king by killing the ruling king of Israel. Judah was ruled by men from the family of David only. Samaria was the capital city of Israel, and Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah.

Our lesson begins during the reign of Ahab, King of Israel. Asa was in the thirty-eighth year of his reign in Judah when Ahab became king in Israel. The evil kings of Israel had led the people completely away from God. Ahab





became king, and he was more evil than all the kings before him. He married Jezebel, a Sidonite, and soon he worshiped Baal and Asherah, the idols which his evil wife worshiped. God's anger against Ahab was very great.

Queen Jezebel was a very wicked and evil woman. Once she sent out orders that all prophets of the Lord God were to be killed. Elijah, a prophet of God, was not killed nor were one hundred other prophets who hid in caves. Obadiah, the head servant of Ahab's house feared God and helped the prophets by taking food and water to them while they were hiding. Elijah,

God's prophet, spoke to King Ahab saying, "There will be no rain in this land until you see my face again." God told Elijah to go into hiding at the brook Cherith, east of Jordan, and God promised to provide him with food. He could drink from the brook. Elijah obeyed God and went to the brook so that Ahab could not find him. God sent ravens twice a day with bread and meat for Elijah, and he drank water from the brook. After a while, the brook dried up because there was no rain in the land. God told Elijah to go to Zarephath in Sidon, and a widow would help him. Elijah went to Zarephath where he met a widow lady as he entered the city. Elijah asked the woman for a drink. As she was going to get it, he said, "Please bring me some bread to eat also." The widow said, "I have no bread. I have only a handful of flour and a little oil. I was just gathering wood to build a fire so I could prepare the last of my flour and oil for my son and me."



Elijah told her, "Go and make a little bread, as you have said, and bring it to me first, then

make more bread for yourself and your son. Do not be afraid. The God of Israel has said that your flour and oil will last until He sends rain again.” The widow believed Elijah and did as he said. Elijah lived at her house for many days, and the flour and oil were never used up! Each day God provided more for the widow, her son, and Elijah.

While Elijah was staying with the woman in Zarephath, the widow's son became sick and died. The widow said to Elijah, “Why have you come here? You came to punish me for my sins! My son is dead!” Elijah took the boy to the upper room and laid him on the bed. Elijah prayed to God saying, “O Lord God, have you brought this trouble to the widow?” Elijah laid down on top of the dead boy three times and cried to God, “I beg You, let this child's life return to him!” God heard Elijah's prayers, and life returned to the boy. Elijah took the boy to his mother, and the widow said, “I know now that you are a man of God, and all the words you speak are truth!”



Because of Ahab's sins and the sins of Israel, God brought a drought (NO rain) on the land. God protected His prophet, Elijah, and gave him food. He sent Elijah to a certain woman in Sidon. This widow was not an Israelite. She was not a true worshiper of God. God used her to help Elijah because he could not safely stay in Israel (Ahab was searching for him to kill him.). The widow became a true believer in God because of the miracles God performed through Elijah. Elijah loved God and served Him even though it meant a lot of trouble and pain, possibly even death! It would have been much easier for Elijah if he had worshiped idols like most of the other Israelites, but Elijah would not serve idols. He served only the true God of Israel.

Sometimes we might think it would be easier to follow the crowd and do things we know are wrong. We need to remember Elijah, and remain true to God, even if it

Level 15A

means trouble, pain, or even death! God has promised to take away all our troubles and pain in heaven if we will only faithfully serve Him now.

STORY QUIZ

1. What was the capital city of Judah?
2. What was the capital city of Israel?
3. What particular sin did the Kings of Israel lead the people to commit?
4. Who was the wicked wife of King Ahab?
5. What prophet of God preached during the days of Ahab and Jezebel?
6. Where did Elijah get food while he was hiding at the brook Cherith?
7. To what town did Elijah go when the brook dried up?
8. How long did the widow's flour and oil last?
9. About whom did Elijah pray asking God to restore life?
10. What did the widow KNOW after Elijah restored the life of her son?

Memory Verse Level Fifteen

But I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you. Jeremiah 7:23

Memory Goal Fifteen Israel's Neighbors

Moabites, Ammonites, Girgashites, Canaanites, Amorites, Amalekites, Kenites, Edomites, Zidonians, Philistines, Hivites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites.

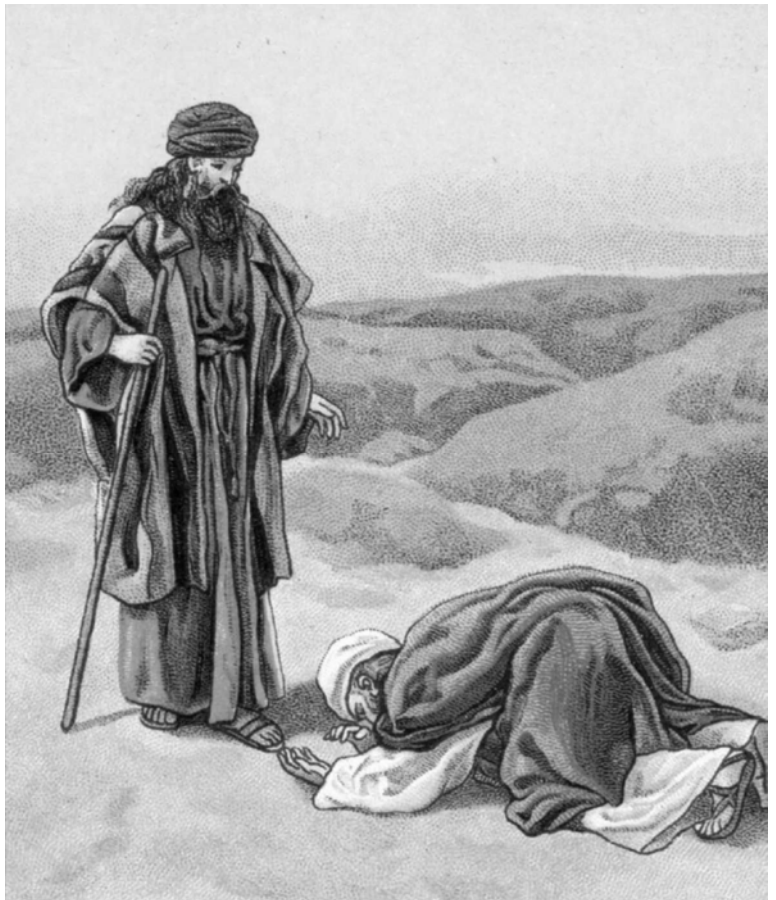
ANSWERS: 1. Jerusalem 2. Samaria 3. Idol worship
4. Jezebel 5. Elijah 6. Ravens brought it.
7. Zarephath 8. Until it rained 9. Widow's son
10. Elijah was from God.

ELIJAH AND THE PRIESTS OF BAAL

I Kings 18

For three years no rain fell in the land of Israel, but God took care of Elijah the prophet. Since there was no rain a great famine came in the land. Finally God told Elijah to go to see King Ahab. You will remember that Elijah had promised Ahab that no rain would come in Israel until he saw Elijah again.

After three and a half years of drought, God told Elijah to go to see Ahab. Ahab had sent his servant Obadiah out to look for water and grass for the animals. Elijah met Obadiah in a field, and Obadiah was very surprised to see him. Elijah told him to go and tell Ahab that Elijah had returned. Obadiah said, “Why do you ask this of me? My master, Ahab, has been searching for you and could never find you. If I go now and tell him you are here, you will disappear again, and Ahab will kill me! Why are you doing this to me? Ahab will surely kill me.”



Elijah promised Obadiah that he would not disappear again, so Obadiah went and brought Ahab to meet with Elijah. Ahab said, “Is that really you, Troublemaker?” Elijah answered, “I have not made trouble for Israel! You made all the trouble because you disobeyed God’s commandments.” Elijah told Ahab to bring the four hundred fifty priests of Baal and the four hundred priests of Asherah to meet with him on Mount Carmel. Ahab sent out a message, and all the priests of the idols came to Mount Carmel to meet with Elijah.

Elijah spoke to all the people saying, “If the Lord is God, follow Him, but if Baal



is god, follow him!” The people did not answer, so Elijah said, “I am the only prophet of the Lord God left in Israel, but Baal has four hundred fifty priests!” Elijah told the people to bring two oxen. He told Baal’s priests to cut up one ox and put it on the altar, but to light no fire under it. The priests of Baal prepared the ox on the altar and Elijah said, “Now call upon your god to put fire

under the sacrifice.” The priests of Baal called out to their idol all morning, but nothing happened. At noon Elijah said, “Call louder. Maybe your god is busy or gone on a trip. Maybe Baal is asleep! Call louder and wake him.” The priests of Baal called louder and louder. They danced and jumped around the altar. They cut their bodies with knives, but when evening came Baal still had not put fire on the altar.

Elijah called the Israelites over to him, and he prepared the second ox. He built an altar of twelve stones, as commanded in the law of Moses, then he dug a trench around the altar. He put wood on the altar and laid the ox on it. Elijah then commanded the people to pour four large jars of water on the altar and wood. He had them do this three times, and the water flowed out into the trench surrounding the altar. Elijah made them fill the trench completely with water.



Elijah then prayed, “O

Lord God of Israel, let it be known today that You are the God of Israel and I am your servant. Answer me, O Lord, so these people will know that You are the only true God.” Suddenly, fire came down from heaven and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water in the trench! When the people saw this they fell down saying, “The Lord, He is God. The Lord, He is God!” Elijah said, “Seize the priests of Baal! Do not let them escape.”

They took the priests of Baal down to the brook Kishon and killed them. Elijah told Ahab, “Go. Eat and drink for I can hear the noise of a heavy rain.” Ahab went to



eat, but Elijah went to Mount Carmel and bowed down to God. Elijah spoke to his servant saying, “Look toward the sea.” The servant looked but saw nothing. Elijah said, “Look again.” This happened seven times, then finally the servant saw the storm cloud at a great distance. Elijah told his servant to tell Ahab to hurry home or he would be caught in the storm, so Ahab got into his chariot and started toward Jezreel. The Spirit of God came upon Elijah, and he ran on foot toward Jezreel. He ran so fast that he reached

Level 15B

the city before Ahab did in the chariot!

God showed His power to the people of Israel, so they bowed down in worship to Him. When Elijah was the only person on God's side, he stood firm and would not turn away to do evil. He knew that God is the only true God, and he refused to serve idols. Some day you may find yourself alone; the only person who wants to do right. Remember Elijah and stand up for God and things that are right and good. Do not follow the crowd to do evil. Love God and keep His commandments.

STORY QUIZ

1. For how long was there no rain in Israel?
2. What did Ahab call Elijah?
3. On what mountain did Elijah meet with the priests of Baal and Asherah?
4. Elijah told the people to worship Baal if what?
5. What did the priests of Baal call upon their god to do?
6. Who mocked the priests of Baal?
7. How many stones did Elijah use in his altar?
8. What did Elijah have poured over his altar and sacrifice?
9. What did God do in answer to Elijah's prayer?
10. How did Elijah get from Mount Carmel to Jezreel?

Memory Verse Level Fifteen

But I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you.

Jeremiah 7:23

Memory Goal Fifteen Israel's Neighbors

Moabites, Ammonites, Girgashites, Canaanites, Amorites, Amalekites, Kenites, Edomites, Zidonians, Philistines, Hivites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites.

ANSWERS: 1. Three and a half years 2. Troublemaker
3. Mount Carmel 4. If Baal is god 5. Send fire on the altar.
6. Elijah 7. 12 8. 12 jars of water 9. Sent fire on the altar.
10. He ran.

CALL OF ELISHA

I Kings 19-20

Ahab, King of Israel, told his wife, Jezebel, all that Elijah had done on Mount Carmel. Jezebel was very angry and sent a message to Elijah saying, “May the gods kill me if I have not killed you by this time tomorrow!” Elijah was very afraid because Jezebel was powerful and had many people under her control. He left his servant in Beersheba and went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a juniper tree and prayed saying, “Please God, it is enough. Please let me die now.” Then he lay down and went to sleep, but he was awakened when an angel of God touched him. The angel said, “***Elijah, wake up and eat.***” Elijah looked up and saw a cake of bread and a jar of water. He ate and drank then went to sleep again. The angel woke him a second time saying, “***Wake up and eat, the journey is too hard for you.***” Elijah ate again, then he traveled for forty days to Mount Sinai. The food which the angel gave Elijah gave him enough strength to travel these forty days without eating.



Elijah lived in a cave on Mount Sinai, and God said to him, “***What are you doing***



here, Elijah?” Elijah said, “I have worked hard for you Lord, but Israel has turned away from You. They have torn down Your altars and killed Your priests. I am the only faithful one left, and they are trying to kill me too.” God told Elijah to stand at a certain place on the mountain, and the Lord passed by on the mount. A strong wind blew and broke up rocks on the mountain, but God was not in the wind. Then there was an earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake. Then a fire burned on the mountain, but God was not in the fire.

Finally a gentle breeze blew, and God said,

“What are you doing here, Elijah?” Elijah said, “I am the only faithful prophet left, and they are trying to kill me.” God told Elijah that his work was not yet finished. He told Elijah to go to Damascus and anoint Hassel as the king of Syria, and to anoint Jehu to be the next king over Israel. God then told Elijah to go and appoint Elisha as the prophet who would take his place. God told Elijah that there were seven thousand people in Israel who had remained faithful and had not bowed down to Baal.

Elijah went as God had commanded and found Elisha plowing his field with twelve pair of oxen. Elijah went to Elisha and threw his mantle (coat) on him. [The mantle was a special coat, probably made of animal fur. Elijah was showing Elisha that he was being called by God to be a prophet.] Elisha asked Elijah to let him go home and tell his parents goodbye. Elijah said, “Go, if you wish. Your calling is not from me but from God.” So Elisha returned home and killed two oxen as a feast for his servants. Then Elisha went to Elijah and served him and Elijah became Elisha's teacher.



King Ahab went to war against Benhadad, King of Syria. A prophet of God told Ahab that he would win the battle so that God could show His power to the Syrians. Ahab won the battle, but Benhadad escaped. He sent a message to Ahab asking to make a covenant, so Ahab made a covenant with the King of Syria instead of killing him. God's prophet went to Ahab and told him that God was not pleased that he had not killed the enemy king. The prophet said, “Your life will be taken because you did not destroy the enemy whom God had appointed for destruction!” Ahab returned to his home feeling very troubled and worried.

In this lesson we have learned about Elijah running away from the wicked Queen Jezebel. Elijah was feeling very tired and lonely, so he asked God to let him die, but God was not yet finished with Elijah. God still had work for Elijah to do. As God commanded, Elijah appointed Elisha as a prophet to take his place. [Here's a little clue to help you remember which of these two prophets came first Elisha, the name with an S came Second.]

Today we may work hard for God, and sometimes it seems like no one else cares about God and His work. We may begin to feel lonely and tired just like Elijah, but God has work for us to do. He has given us the job of telling the world about Jesus. He promised to be with us and help us in this work, but sometimes we forget. We need to always remember that God is with us and has promised to give us rest and peace in heaven. When we feel tired and alone, we should remember that God is with us and there are other people who love and serve God.



STORY QUIZ

1. What Queen swore to kill Elijah?
2. What did Elijah ask God to let him do when he sat under a juniper tree?
3. Who touched Elijah and gave him food?
4. For how long did Elijah travel without eating after he ate the angel food?
5. To what mountain did Elijah go to live?
6. How many faithful people did Elijah believe lived in Israel?
7. How many faithful did God say there were in Israel?
8. Who did Elijah choose as his replacement?
9. What did Elijah throw on Elisha to show that he was being chosen to serve as a prophet?
10. What was a mantle?

Memory Verse Level Fifteen

But I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you. Jeremiah 7:23

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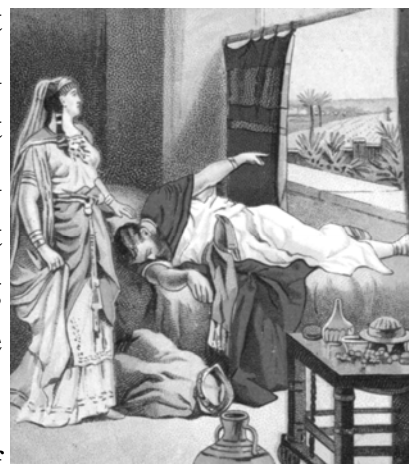
ANSWERS: 1. Jezebel 2. Die 3. An angel 4. 40 days and nights 5. Sinai 6. Only himself 7. 7000 8. Elisha 9. His mantle 10. A coat or cape

AHAB AND NABOTH

I Kings 21-22

King Ahab of Israel asked a man named Naboth to sell him a vineyard (field) which Naboth owned. The vineyard was next to the king's palace in Jezreel, and he wanted it for a vegetable garden. Ahab offered to buy it or trade other land for it, but Naboth refused to sell the vineyard which was part of his inheritance.

Ahab was very angry with Naboth. He was so upset that he went home and went to bed. He lay there pouting and refusing to eat. Queen Jezebel came to him saying, "What has upset you so much that you won't even eat?" Ahab told his wife that he wanted to buy Naboth's vineyard, but Naboth refused to sell it. Jezebel said, "Are you not the king over all the land of Israel? Get up and eat! I will get the vineyard for you!"



Queen Jezebel wrote letters to the elders of the city of Jezreel and sealed the letters with Ahab's royal seal. In the letters she told the elders to proclaim a fast for Jezreel. [A fast day was a day of fasting and prayer to call upon the 'gods' for guidance and help.] Jezebel told the elders to hire men to say that Naboth had cursed God. Jezebel ordered the elders to publicly accuse Naboth of cursing God and then take him outside the city and stone him to death. The elders did just as they were commanded in the letters. They hired two men to bring false testimony against Naboth. The people then took Naboth to the gates of the city and stoned him to death. The dogs of the city came and licked up Naboth's blood. The elders sent word to Jezebel saying, "Naboth is dead." Jezebel told her husband, "Naboth is dead. Go and take his vineyard for your own."



God spoke to the prophet Elijah telling him to go to see Ahab in Naboth's vineyard. Elijah went and said to the King, "You have done evil in the sight of God.

Level 15D

Now evil will come to you and your household. Every son of your family will die, because you provoked the anger of the Lord God. You have caused Israel to sin. In the place where the dogs licked Naboth's blood, the dogs will lick your blood, and your evil wife Jezebel will be eaten by the dogs!" When Ahab heard the words of the Lord from Elijah, he tore his clothes and laid down in his bed and fasted. God was pleased because Ahab was sorry for his sin. God told Elijah that the trouble would come on Ahab's sons after Ahab was dead. The king would not have to live through the death of his own sons.



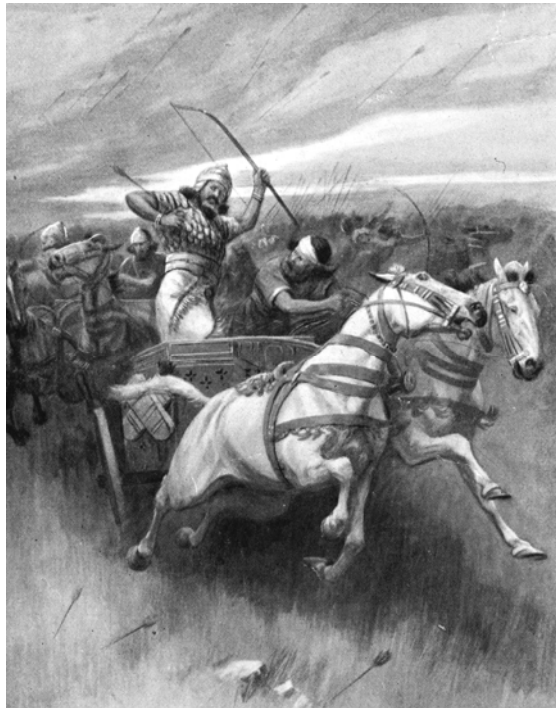
Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, became king over Judah during the fourth year of Ahab's rule over Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king over Judah, and he ruled twenty-five years. He was a good king and walked in the ways of God, but some of the people of Judah still worshiped idols. Jehoshaphat made peace with Israel and removed many sinful and wicked men from the land of Judah.

Jehoshaphat went to see Ahab and told him that the two nations should work together to take back some of the land that the Syrians had taken from them. Ahab called the prophets of God, about four hundred of them, and asked them whether it was God's will that the land be taken back from the Syrians. All the prophets said, "Go and fight! God will be with you and restore the land to His people." Jehoshaphat was not satisfied and asked if there were other prophets they could consult. Ahab said, "There is one other prophet. His name is Micaiah, but he hates me and always tells me bad things!"

Jehoshaphat insisted that Micaiah be called, so Ahab sent for Micaiah. Micaiah told Ahab and Jehoshaphat that the battle would be the death of King Ahab. Ahab said, "See! I told you he hates me and always says evil about me!" Micaiah told the kings that he had seen a vision. He said, "I saw the throne of God and angels all around it. God said, '*Who will trick Ahab so that he will go to war and be killed?*' One of the heavenly spirits said, 'I will go and make all the prophets tell Ahab that it is good to go to war. He will believe them, and he will die in battle!'" Ahab was very angry because of Micaiah's

words, and he commanded that Micaiah be kept in prison until he and the army returned from the battle with Syria. Micaiah said, “If you return from the battle, then I have not spoken the words of the Lord.”

Ahab and Jehoshaphat went together to fight the Syrians. Ahab disguised himself thinking that this would help him be safe. Ahab was hit by an arrow and his blood ran down from the chariot. Near sunset the men of Israel left the battle and returned home. Ahab was dead, and they took his body to Jezreel. They washed his blood from the chariot, and the dogs came and licked up the blood. This happened exactly as Elijah had prophesied.



Ahaziah, son of Ahab, became the new king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was not harmed in the battle, and he continued to rule in Judah. When he died, his son, Jehoram, ruled Judah for two years. Jehoram was evil and led the people to worship Baal, so God's anger came against Jehoram and Judah.

In this lesson we learned how God led Ahab into a battle so he could be killed. Ahab was evil and sinned often. God promised that he would die and the dogs would lick his blood just as they had licked Naboth's. Ahab was sorry for his sin, so God did not destroy Ahab's family while Ahab lived. We know God always keeps His promises, so we know Ahab's family was destroyed and a new family began to rule over Israel. God forgives all people when they truly repent of their sins, but they must still suffer the consequences of their sins.

STORY QUIZ

1. Who owned a vineyard next to the palace in Jezreel?
2. Why did Naboth refuse to sell his land to Ahab?
3. What did Ahab do when he could not have the land?
4. Who promised to get the vineyard for Ahab?
5. To whom did Jezebel write letters commanding them to proclaim a fast?
6. Of what was Naboth falsely accused?
7. What happened to Naboth?
8. Who did God send to talk to Ahab about what had happened to Naboth?
9. What did Ahab do when he heard Elijah's warnings?
10. What happened to Ahab in the battle with Syria?

Memory Verse Level Fifteen

But I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you.

Jeremiah 7:23

Memory Goal Fifteen Israel's Neighbors

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ANSWERS: 1. Naboth 2. It was his inheritance. 3. Went to bed and pouted
4. Jezebel 5. Elders of Jezreel 6. Cursing God 7. He was stoned to death
8. Elijah 9. He repented and fasted. 10. He was killed.

ELIJAH IS TAKEN

II Kings 1-3

After King Ahab of Israel died, his son Ahaziah became the new king. Ahaziah ruled for two years, and he did much that was evil in the sight of the Lord God. God had warned Ahab that his family would be killed and a new family would rule over Israel. Now God's anger burned against King Ahaziah because of his sins.

One day Ahaziah fell from his roof and was very sick. He sent a messenger to the idol god Baalzebub (the god of the Ekron) asking the god whether he would live or die. The Lord God was very angry that Ahaziah asked the idol god this question instead of asking the true God of Israel. God told Elijah to tell the messenger that the king would die because he asked Baalzebub instead of God.

The messenger took Elijah's message to King Ahaziah, and the king sent fifty soldiers with their commander to bring Elijah to the palace. When the soldiers came, Elijah called out to God asking that fire be sent from heaven to destroy the fifty soldiers and their commander. God heard Elijah and sent fire to kill the soldiers. Ahaziah sent another fifty soldiers with their commander, and again God sent fire out of heaven to destroy them. The third time Ahaziah sent his soldiers, the commander called to Elijah, "I know that you have called fire from heaven to destroy the others who came to take you. I beg you! Please do not call down fire upon me and my men." God told Elijah not to be afraid to go with the soldiers, so Elijah went to see King Ahaziah. He told the king that he would die because he asked help from Baalzebub instead of

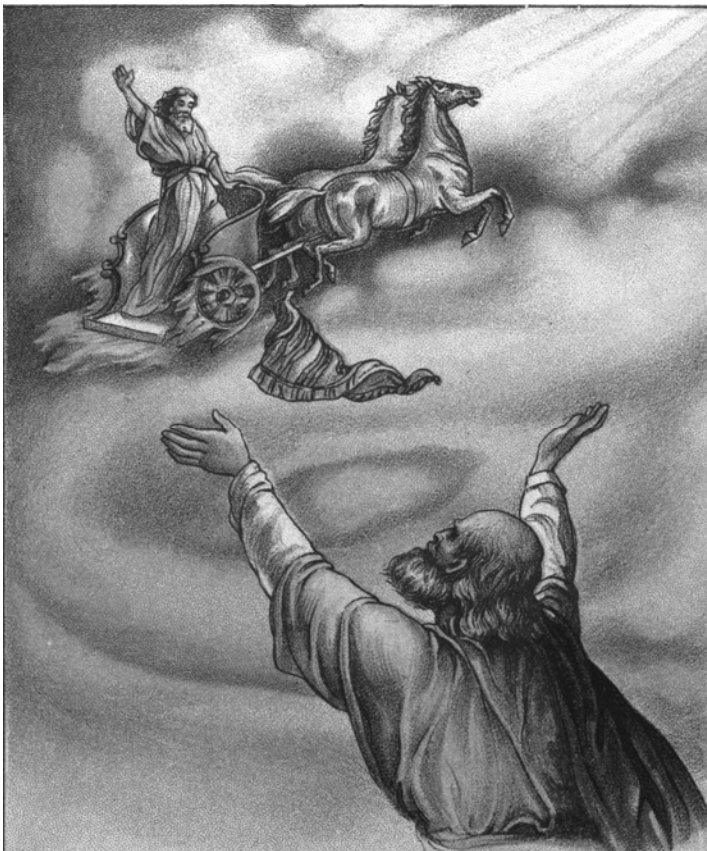


Level 15E

from God. So Ahaziah died, and his brother, Jehoram, became king of Israel.

Elijah finished the work which God had appointed for him. The time had come for God to take this faithful prophet. Elisha went with Elijah to Gilgal. Elijah wanted Elisha to stay in Gilgal, but Elisha refused to leave his master and teacher. The two prophets traveled on to Bethel. Some prophets of that city came & asked Elisha, “Do you know that the Lord will take your master today?” Elisha said, “I know.” From Bethel they went to Jericho, and again, the prophets of the city came to speak to Elisha. They said, “Do you know that God will take your teacher today?” Elisha told them that he knew.

Elisha and Elijah left Jericho and went to the Jordan River. Fifty prophets from Jericho followed them at a distance, because they wanted to see what would happen. Elijah and Elisha went to the edge of the river, and Elijah hit the water of the river with his mantle. The waters of Jordan parted, and the two prophets crossed on dry ground. Elijah said to Elisha, “What shall I do for you before I go?” Elisha said, “I would like to have a double portion of your Spirit!” Elijah said, “It is a hard thing you ask for, but if you see me when I am taken you will receive what you have asked for. If you do not see me when I go, then you will not receive what you ask for.”



As the two men walked along talking, a chariot and horses of fire appeared and came between them to separate them, and Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah, the faithful prophet of God, was taken alive to heaven and did not have to suffer death. Elisha, the student prophet, saw his teacher as he was taken up to heaven.

Elisha picked up Elijah's mantle which the old prophet dropped as he went up. Elisha went to the river Jordan and hit the water with the mantle and the water of the Jordan opened for Elisha to cross on dry ground. The fifty prophets



who had followed said, “The Spirit of Elijah is now on Elisha!” Then they bowed down to Elisha. The prophets wanted to go and search the mountains for Elijah's body. They had not seen Elijah as the Lord took him up. Elisha told them not to go search, but they insisted. They searched for three days before returning to Elisha. Elisha told them, “I told you it would do no good to search for the master.”

Elisha went into Jericho, and he purified the water which had been causing much sickness and death in the city. From Jericho he went to Bethel. As he came near the city of Bethel some young boys came out to Elisha making fun of him saying, “Go up, Baldhead! Go up!” But they were not just mocking Elisha, they were mocking God. They were meaning, “Go up to heaven, Baldhead, like your master did.” Because of their mockery Elisha cursed the boys, and God sent two bears out of the woods and forty-two boys were torn up by the bears!

The Moabites rebelled against Jehoram, King of Israel. The kings of Judah, and Israel, and Edom joined together to fight the Moabites. The armies went into the desert, but after seven days with no water, they went to Elisha asking how to find water and how to win the battle. Elisha told them that he would help them because King Jehoshaphat of Judah was with them. He instructed them to dig



Level 15E

ditches in the desert, and the Lord God would fill the ditches with water. He also told them that they would win the war with the Moabites. The kings did as Elisha said, and the next morning water came and filled all the ditches they had dug in the desert. The armies had plenty of water, and they won a great victory against Moab.

God's power went out of Elijah and entered into Elisha. Elisha was then able to do miracles and carry God's messages to the people and the kings. Elijah finished the work God had appointed for him, and he received a great reward. Elijah was always faithful to the Lord and trusted in Him. He did get tired sometimes, but he never quit serving God. We need to be more like Elijah. We need to remain faithful to God. We must not follow the crowd, even though that is often the easiest thing to do. We must stand up for God and do only those things which are pleasing to Him.

STORY QUIZ

1. What son of Ahab fell from his roof and was very ill?
2. What did Elijah do when Ahaziah sent men to get him?
3. Who traveled with Elijah when he was about to be taken?
4. How many prophets of Jericho followed Elijah?
5. What did Elijah use to hit the waters of Jordan?
6. For what did Elisha ask?
7. What appeared and passed between Elijah and Elisha?
8. What did Elijah drop as he was taken?
9. What body of water did Elisha open with the mantle?
10. What physical feature was Elisha known to have?

See Memory Work on Page 272

ANSWERS: 1. Ahaziah 2. Called fire from heaven on them. 3. Elisha 4. Fifty 5. His mantle 6. Double portion of Elijah's spirit 7. Chariot and horses of fire 8. His mantle 9. Jordan 10. Bald head

ELISHA THE PROPHET

II Kings 4-6

In our last lesson we learned that the prophet Elijah being taken to heaven, and Elisha became the main prophet in the land of Israel. In this lesson, we will study some of the events from Elisha's life and how God used this man to do His work in Israel.



One of the prophets who followed Elisha died, and his wife came to Elisha telling him that her husband had owed many debts. She said that the men to whom money was owed wanted their payment. Since she was poor and unable to pay them, the men were going to take her two young sons as slaves. She begged Elisha for help.

Elisha asked the woman if she had anything of value in her house. She told him that she had nothing, only a little oil in a jar. Elisha told her to borrow many empty jars from her neighbors, then go into her house and close the door. Elisha said, “Pour oil from your jar into the empty jars.” The woman did as Elisha said, and she filled every borrowed jar. When the last jar was filled, her jar of oil was empty. Elisha told the widow to sell the jars of oil to earn money to pay the debts. The woman's sons were not taken from her because God provided much oil from the little which was in her jar.

When Elisha traveled from city to city, he stayed in the homes of the people. In the city of Shunem he was always invited to eat and rest in the home of a great lady of the city. The Shunammite woman even built a room onto her house and prepared it as a bedroom for Elisha. Elisha appreciated this kindness and he wanted to do something special for the woman and her husband. His servant said, “The woman's husband is old,

Level 15F

and they have no son.” Elisha told the woman that she would have a baby son. The woman said, “Please, do not tell me lies like that! Do not give me hope!” Elisha had not lied to the woman, and the next year the woman had her baby son.

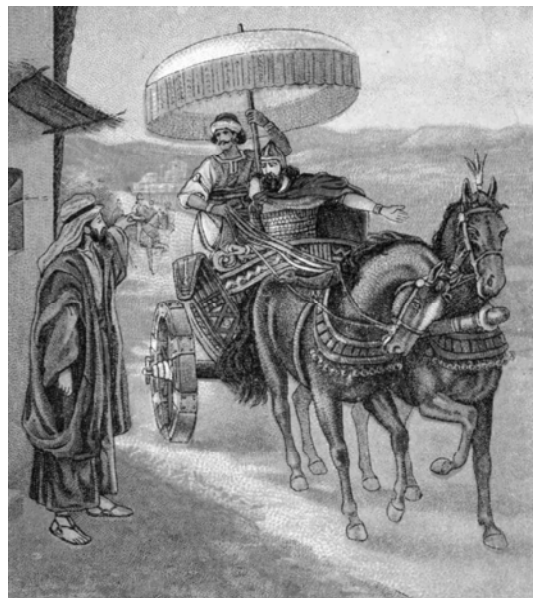
One day when the son was grown, he became sick and his head hurt. His mother



put him in Elisha's bed and nursed him, but he died. The Shunammite woman went to Elisha at Mount Carmel and said, “I asked you for nothing, yet I was given this son! But now he is dead!” Elisha was very sorry for the woman, so he told his servant, “Take my staff (rod) and go to the woman's house. Lay my staff on the face of her son.” The woman begged Elisha to go home with her, and

finally Elisha agreed to go. The servant arrived at the woman's house and laid the staff on the young man's face, but nothing happened. Elisha arrived and went into the room. The prophet of God prayed, then he lay down on the young man and put his hands on the son's hands and his mouth on the son's mouth. Soon the body of the young man began to feel warm. Elisha walked about in the room for a little while then returned and lay on the boy again. Suddenly, the boy woke up and sneezed seven times. He lived again! Elisha sent the servant to the woman saying, “Your son lives!” Elisha used the same method that Elijah had used to raise the widow's son from the dead. God heard Elisha's prayer and the son of the Shunammite woman was made alive again.

There was a great man named Naaman in Syria. Naaman was the captain of the Syrian army, and he had great honor and fame, but he had the dreadful disease of leprosy. In a war with Israel, Naaman had taken Israelite captives, and a young Israelite girl worked for Naaman's wife. One day the girl said, “It is too bad that my master is not in Israel.



The prophet Elisha could heal that leprosy.” Some of the servants told Naaman what the girl said. King Benhadad sent Naaman to Israel with letters asking the king of Israel to heal Naaman. The king of Israel was very upset because he had no power to heal the Syrian commander. Elisha heard about Naaman and told the king to send Naaman to see him.

Naaman went to see Elisha and took many horses and chariots. Elisha did not go out to see Naaman, but he sent his servant out with a message for the commander. Elisha said, “Go and dip yourself seven times in the Jordan River, and you will be healed.” Naaman was very angry when the servant brought the message from Elisha. He said, “I thought the prophet would come out and wave his hands over me and call on his God,



but he has not even come outside his house to see me! Dip in the Jordan River! The rivers in Syria are much better than the Jordan. Why should I do this crazy thing?”

Naaman turned to go to his own land, but one of his men said, “If the prophet had told you to do some great thing you would have done it. Now he has told you to do something easy. Please, go now and dip in the Jordan and be healed.” Naaman listened to his servant and went to the Jordan. He dipped his body once in the water, but nothing



changed. He dipped again, but there was still no change. Naaman dipped a third time ... a fourth time ... a fifth time ... a sixth time, but still he had leprosy. Naaman dipped his body seven times in the river and he was cleaned of the awful leprosy. Naaman was so very happy that he returned to Elisha and said, “I know now that there is no God in all the earth except the Lord God of Israel. Now let me reward you with gifts.” Elisha refused to accept any gift or payment from Naaman. Naaman promised that he would never again worship



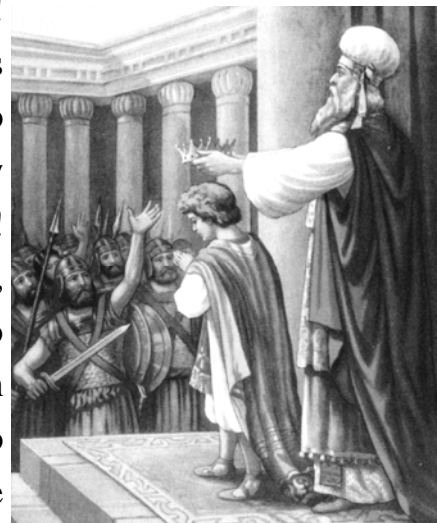
idols.

Now, Elisha's servant, Gehazi, thought, "My master took nothing from Naaman. Maybe he will give me some of those gifts." So, Elisha's servant went out and stopped Naaman on the road. He told Naaman that two poor men had come to Elisha's house, and Elisha wanted a little money and some clothes for these men. Naaman gladly gave the servant two bags of silver and two sets of clothes for the poor men. When the servant returned home, Elisha was disappointed and angry because of what his servant had done. He said to the man, "The leprosy of Naaman shall be

yours." Gehazi was immediately covered with the leprosy.

King Benhadad of Syria made secret plans to make war against Israel. God sent Elisha to the king of Israel telling him where the Syrian army was camped, so Israel was not caught in the attack. This happened several times, so the king of Syria thought someone in his own camp was giving information to Israel. One of the Syrian men said, "Elisha, the prophet of Israel, is helping the king of Israel." Benhadad sent a large army to surround Dothan where Elisha was living. When Elisha and his servant saw the men and the chariots, the servant said, "Look at all this army!

What are we going to do now?" Elisha said, "Our army is much larger than theirs." Then Elisha prayed asking God to open the eyes of his servant. The servant looked up and saw that the mountain was filled with chariots and horses of fire! Elisha prayed asking God to make the Syrian army blind, then Elisha went to the army and said, "You have come to the wrong city. Follow me and I will take you to the man you are seeking." Elisha led the Syrian army right into Samaria, the capital of Israel. Elisha asked God to open the



eyes of the Syrian army, and they saw that they were in the middle of the enemy city, surrounded by the Israelite army. The king of Israel wanted to kill all the Syrians, but Elisha said, “Give them food and drink then send them home.” The king did as Elisha said, and the Syrians did not trouble Israel again for a long time.

God sent much trouble and war on Israel because of their sins. The kings of Israel were evil and led the people into idol worship. God's prophets warned the kings and the people to return to God, but they would not listen. On the last page of this level (15) you will find a chart showing the kings of Israel and Judah. Also listed are the number of years each king ruled and the prophets who warned the people.



During the next few years, Benhadad, King of Syria, was murdered by Hazael, and Hazael became the king in his place. King Jehoshaphat died and his son, Jehoram became king of Judah. Jehoram married Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Athaliah was a very wicked woman. She proclaimed herself Queen of Judah and had her own grandchildren murdered. One of those grandchildren was saved and kept hidden away until he was six years old. Joash was then brought out and crowned as king and the wicked Athaliah was killed.

Elisha anointed Jehu to be the king of Israel. Jehu and his men killed all the descendants of Ahab. When Jehu went to Jezreel, Queen Jezebel thought she would win the new king over with her beauty and her tricks. She called to Jehu from a window. Jehu told two of her servants to throw her down, and they did. The dogs came and ate the body of the wicked queen ...just as Elijah had prophesied.

Elisha died while Jehoash was ruling in Israel. Elisha spent his life preaching to the people, telling them to return to God. The people of Israel did not listen to Elisha but continued to do evil and worship idols. God punished them by allowing their enemies to come against them.

A very interesting fact about the power of Elisha occurred after the prophet was dead and buried for a long time. A dead body was put in the cave where Elisha was

Level 15F

buried. When the dead body touched the bones of Elisha life was restored to the man!
The power of God is truly awesome!

STORY QUIZ

1. What did Elisha tell the widow to borrow from neighbors?
2. How much oil did the widow have in her jar?
3. How many jars were filled with the little oil from the widow's jar?
4. What man and woman built a room on their house for Elisha?
5. What did Elisha do to restore life to the Shunammite's son.
6. Who was Naaman?
7. What disease did Naaman have?
8. What did Elisha tell Naaman to do to be healed?
9. Who got leprosy because he took gifts for God's miracle?
10. What king of Israel had Jezebel thrown from her window?

Memory Verse Level Fifteen

But I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you.

Jeremiah 7:23

Memory Goal Fifteen Israel's Neighbors

Moabites, Ammonites, Girgashites, Canaanites, Amorites, Amalekites,
Kenites, Edomites, Zidonians, Philistines, Hivites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites.

- ANSWERS: 1. empty oil jars
2. a little
3. all that she borrowed
4. Shunammite
5. Lay on him, breathed into him, prayed to God
6. Commander of the Syrian army.
7. Leprosy
8. Dip in the Jordan River 7 times
9. Gehazi
10. Jehu

KINGS OF ISRAEL

SAUL (40 yrs)

DAVID (40 yrs)

SOLOMON (40 yrs)

KINGS OF ISRAEL

Jeroboam (22 yrs)
Nadab (2 yrs)
Baasha (24 yrs)
Elah (2 yrs)
Zimri (7 days)
Omri (12 yrs)
Ahab (22 yrs)
Ahaziah (2 yrs)
Jehoram (12 yrs)
Jehu (28 yrs)
Jehoahaz (17 yrs)
Jehoash (16 yrs)
Jeroboam 2nd (41 yrs)
Zachariah (6 months)
Shallum (1 month)
Menaham (10 yrs)
Pekahiah ((2 yrs)
Pekah (20 yrs)
Hoshea (9 yrs)
Taken into Syrian Captivity

PROPHETS

Elijah

Elisha
Obadiah
Hosea
Amos
Joel

Isaiah
Micah

Jeremiah
Zephaniah
Habakkuk

KINGS OF JUDAH

Rehoboam (17 yrs)
Abijah (3 yrs)
Asa (41 yrs)

Jehoshaphat (25 yrs)

Jehoram (8 yrs)
Ahaziah (1 yr)
Queen Athaliah (6 yrs)
Joash (40 yrs)
Amaziah (29 yrs)
Uzziah (52)
Jotham (16)
Ahaz (16)
Hezekiah (29 yrs)
Manasseh (51 yrs)
Amon (2 yrs)
Josiah (51 yrs)
Jehoahaz (3 months)
Jehoiakim (11 yrs)
Jehoiachin (Taken as
captive into Babylon)
Zedekiah (11 yrs)

THE FALL OF ISRAEL

II Kings 15-17

After the death of Solomon the nation of Israel was split into two nations, Judah and Israel. Two of the tribes made up the nation of Judah and ten tribes made up the nation of Israel. You will remember that Rehoboam, son of Solomon, was made king after his father died, and ten tribes rebelled and made Jeroboam their king. It was God's will that the nation of Israel be divided and that Jeroboam should be king. God allowed this to happen because of the sins of Solomon and the descendants of Israel.



Many kings came to power in the lands of Israel and Judah. You have studied about some of these kings, and on the previous page there is a list of the kings of both nations. Israel's kings were wicked and did much evil in the sight of the Lord. God sent prophets to warn them to return to Him, but the people of Israel did not listen to the prophets. The nation of Assyria had become very strong and mighty. They captured lands around them, coming closer and closer to the nation of Israel.

Pekahiah, one of the evil kings of Israel, had been killed by a captain in his army, and that captain, Pekah, became the king. Pekah made an alliance with the king of Syria to fight against Judah. Together they attacked the city of Jerusalem, but they did not take the city. Ahaz, king of Judah, sent messengers to the king of Assyria with gifts of gold, silver, and other treasures. He asked the Assyrians to come and help him fight against Israel and Syria. The king of Assyria came and saved Judah, then he killed the king of Syria and took over that kingdom. He also warred against Israel and took many captives into Assyria. The conditions in Israel had gone from bad to worse. God allowed His people to continue in their evil, giving them many chances to repent, but they did not return to God.

One king after another came to the throne in Israel, but they were evil and led the people to idol worship. God sent prophets into Israel to warn the people, but they refused

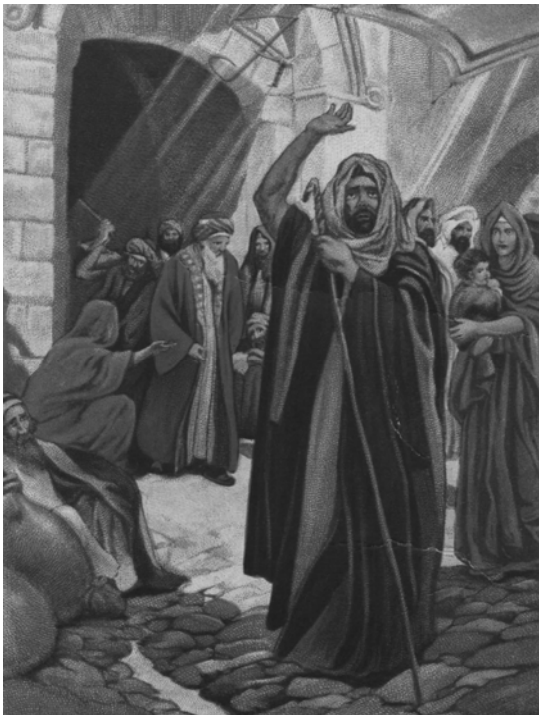
Level 16A

to listen. Nineteen kings ruled over Israel ... the nineteenth was Hoshea. He killed Pekah and became king of what was left of the nation of Israel. Many of the cities of Israel had been captured by the Assyrians, and Hoshea had to pay yearly tribute to the king of Assyria.

In the 9th year of his reign, Hoshea decided that he would no longer pay tribute to Assyria. The Assyrian king, Shalmaneser, would not allow the tribute to go unpaid, so he sent his army to attack the city of Samaria. Hoshea was taken captive and put into an Assyrian prison. The Assyrians fought against Samaria three years before they took the city. The Assyrians took many people of Israel out of their land into Assyria and they never returned from captivity. Some Israelites were left in Israel, but they were servants to their captors. The nation of Israel, the northern kingdom, was never reestablished. The people of Israel married their captors, which left the only pure blood descendants of Jacob in the land of Judah.

Why did God allow all this to happen to His chosen people? These are the people He brought out of Egypt. He gave them the land of Israel. He had promised to be with them. Why did God allow this nation of His people to be destroyed? Let's see if we can understand why.

God had brought these people out of Egyptian slavery, and through Moses, He



gave them special laws. One of the laws commanded that the people to have no other gods. Israel did not keep God's commandment. Israel sinned! They did the things that were not right in the sight of God. They built shrines and altars in the land and set up monuments and images to worship. They burned incense to the idols, just like the nations around them. Israel knew God's laws. God even sent prophets to warn them, but Israel continued to sin. Amos was the first prophet to tell about the coming end of the nation. Hosea warned them that the nation would fall to the enemy if the people did not repent. Isaiah, God's prophet in



Judah, preached to the people, warning of the coming destruction. The Israelites were stubborn and turned away from God completely. God was patient with Israel and gave them plenty of time to repent, but they refused to turn back to God. The 17th chapter of Second Kings tells us about twenty sins committed by the nation of Israel. God finally sent the nation of Assyria to capture Israel. God was very angry with Israel, and He removed them from His sight.

Remember, God always punishes those who do evil. He loves us very much and gives us a lot of time to repent and serve Him, but He always punishes those who do not obey His commandments.

STORY QUIZ

1. What did Israel do that very much displeased God?
2. To which nation did Hosea and Amos preach?
3. What did the prophets tell Israel to do?
4. What nation helped Judah fight Israel and Syria?
5. Who was the last king of Israel?
6. What Assyrian king took Hoshea captive?
7. What three prophets told about the coming destruction of Israel?
8. Why did God allow His people, Israel, to be taken into captivity?
9. How many reasons for Israel's destruction is given in the 17th chapter of Second Kings?
10. What did God do to Israel?

Level 16A

Memory Verse Level Sixteen

Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. Rather, worship the Lord your God; it is He who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies. II Kings 17:38-39

Memory Goal Level Sixteen: The Books of the Old Testament

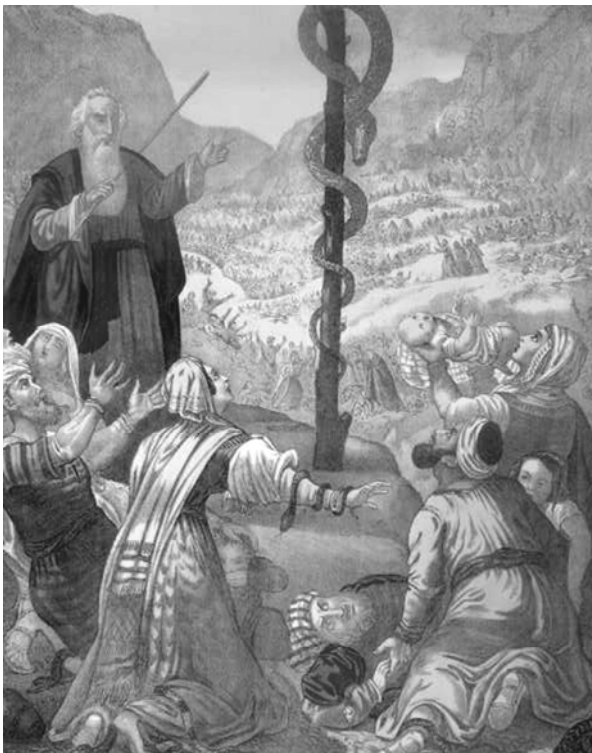
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First & Second Samuel, First & Second Kings, First & Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentation, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi.

ANSWERS: 1. worshiped idols 2. Israel 3. Repent 4. Assyria 5. Hoshea
6. Shalmaneser 7. Hoshea, Amos, Isaiah 8. They refused to repent.
9. 20 10. Removed them from His sight.

King Hezekiah

II Kings 18-20

In our last lesson we learned how God sent the nation of Assyria against Israel to destroy them and remove them from the land which God had given them. They were destroyed because they turned away from God to serve idols. They refused to listen to the warnings of God's prophets.



During the time Hoshea ruled over Israel, King Ahaz ruled in Judah. Ahaz was an evil king who closed the house of God and destroyed the furniture. He built idols and altars in many cities of Judah. During the third year of Hoshea's rule in Israel, Ahaz died, and his son, Hezekiah became the new king over Judah. Hezekiah was a good king and he wanted to serve God. He removed the high places and broke down the idols and images which the people had built for idol worship. He found that the people were even worshiping the brass serpent Moses had made in the wilderness. You will remember how God commanded Moses to build a brass serpent, so the people could be healed of snake bite in the wilderness. Now the children of Israel were worshiping that brass serpent! Hezekiah broke it into pieces and called it "Ne Hush Tan" which means a worthless piece of brass. Hezekiah trusted in the Lord God and obeyed His commandments, so God was with Hezekiah in all things.

Hezekiah had to pay tribute to the king of Assyria, but this caused a hardship on the people of Judah, so he decided to stop paying. The king of Assyria sent his armies into Judah and captured many of the fortified cities. Hezekiah sent a message to Assyria saying that he would pay whatever tribute the king wanted if the Assyrians would leave Judah alone. The king of Assyria demanded that Hezekiah pay three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. Hezekiah gave the Assyrians the gold and silver in the

Level 16B

temple and in his own house. He also cut the gold from the doors of the temple to pay the tribute demanded by the Assyrians.

The king of Assyria sent men to Jerusalem. They called out to the men of Jerusalem, “Who can deliver you from the king of Assyria? Don’t you know that every land has fallen to our king, and the gods have not been able to protect against him. Do not believe Hezekiah when he says that your God will protect you. No god is great enough to stand against the king of Assyria. Why don’t you just give up and come join us. Your king and your God will not help you.”

The people of Judah did not listen to the words of the men from Assyria, and they would not answer them. When Hezekiah heard what the Assyrians were saying, he was very upset. He tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes and went into the house of the Lord. He sent a message to the prophet Isaiah asking him to pray for Judah. Isaiah sent word to the king saying, “Do not be afraid of the Assyrians. God will cause the Assyrians to think there is trouble in their own land, and they will return home.” Just as Isaiah prophesied the men of Assyria heard a rumor and returned to their own land.

Another message was sent to Hezekiah telling him not to trust God to deliver Judah from the Assyrians. Hezekiah took the letter into the temple and laid it before God, and he prayed, begging God for help. God spoke to the prophet Isaiah giving him a message for King Hezekiah. God said to Hezekiah, ***“You need not be afraid of Assyria. He shall not come into Jerusalem to fight my people. He shall not come here. I will fight for this city and save it because of my servant David.”***

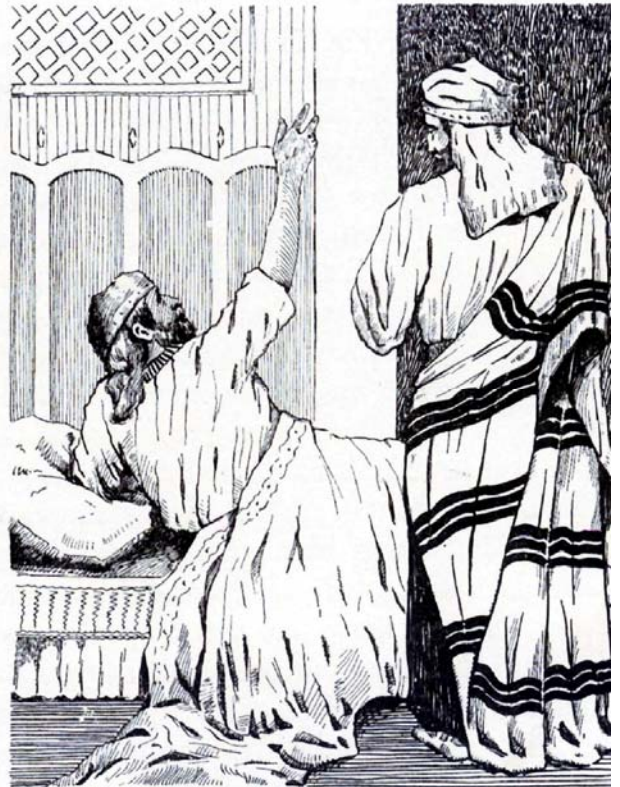


That very night an angel of God went into the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000 soldiers. When the king woke and found his men dead, he returned to his home in Ninevah. One day as the Assyrian king was worshiping his idol god, two of his sons came and killed their father. Because of Hezekiah’s love and faithfulness, God saved Jerusalem and did not allow the Assyrians to take Judah.

After this, Hezekiah became very sick. Isaiah the prophet went to the king and told him that God said, ***“Get all your business in order because you are going to die.”*** Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and cried. He prayed to God saying, “Please Lord, remember how I have been faithful to You and served You all the days of my life.”

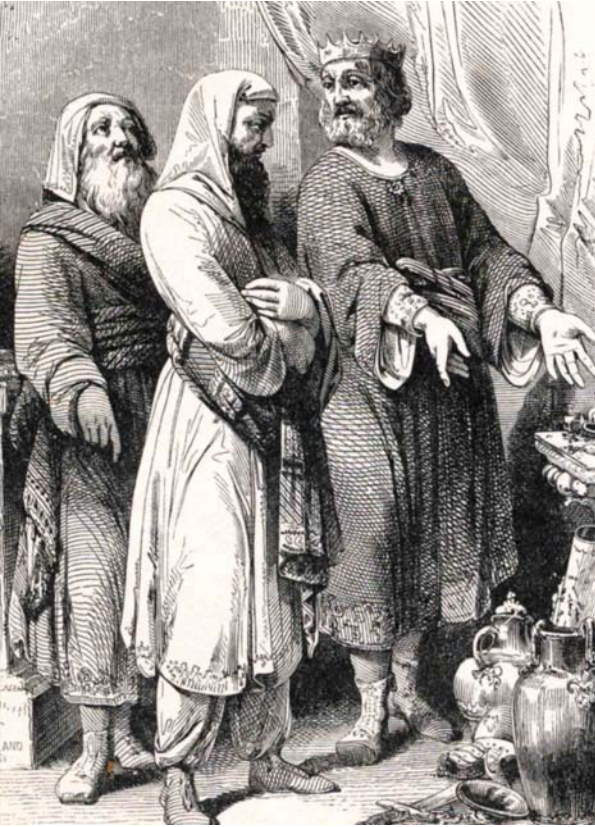
Isaiah was in the courtyard when the word of God came to him and told him to go back and tell Hezekiah, ***“I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. Now I will heal you, and you shall not die. On the third day you will go up to the temple, and I will give you fifteen more years of life.”***

God also told Isaiah to tell Hezekiah that He would deliver the city of Jerusalem from the Assyrians. Isaiah did as God commanded and returned to Hezekiah with the message. Hezekiah asked Isaiah to give him a sign showing that God would heal him and that he would go to the temple on the third day. Isaiah said, “This is the sign: Do you want the sun to move forward or backward ten steps?” Hezekiah said that it was natural for the sun to move forward, so he asked that the sun move backward ten steps to show that Isaiah spoke the truth. Isaiah called out to God and God caused the shadow of the sun to move backward by ten steps!



The king of Babylon heard that King Hezekiah was sick, so he sent messengers with letters and gifts for Hezekiah. Hezekiah was pleased with this kindness, and he showed the Babylonian messengers all the treasures of his house and of the whole kingdom. There was nothing that Hezekiah did not show them. Isaiah came to the king and asked who the men were. Hezekiah told the prophet that the men were from Babylon, and that he had showed them all the treasures of the land of Judah. Isaiah said, “Hear now, the words of the Lord God. ***‘The day is coming when all the treasures of your house will be taken into Babylon, and there will be nothing left. Some of your***

sons will be taken into Babylon, and they shall be officials in the Babylonian court.”



Hezekiah said, “The words you speak are good.” The king thought, “It is good that this will not happen while I live.” But the king was wrong, this was not a good thing. This was a warning to the people of Judah.

Hezekiah was a good king and did what was right in God’s sight, and the land did good under his leadership. When Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh became king of Judah. This son was born to the king three years after God told Hezekiah that he would die. This son is the one listed in the lineage to Jesus Christ.

Hezekiah obeyed and trusted God, so God was with him and delivered Judah from the Assyrians. Hezekiah did wrong by showing off his treasures to the Babylonians. God said that the riches and people of Judah would be taken to Babylon. The end of Judah was near!

STORY QUIZ

1. What did King Ahaz of Judah close up?
2. What kind of man was King Hezekiah of Judah?
3. What were the people worshipping that Hezekiah called “Ne Hush Tan?”
4. Who did Hezekiah ask to pray for Judah?
5. What did Hezekiah do with the Assyrian’s letter?
6. Who killed 185,000 sleeping Assyrian soldiers?
7. What personal message did Isaiah take Hezekiah?
8. How many years did God add to Hezekiah’s life?
9. What sign did God provide for Hezekiah that He would do as He said?
10. What wicked son of Hezekiah became king?

Memory Verse Level Sixteen

Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. Rather, worship the Lord your God; it is He who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies. II Kings 17:38-39

Memory Goal Level Sixteen: The Books of the Old Testament

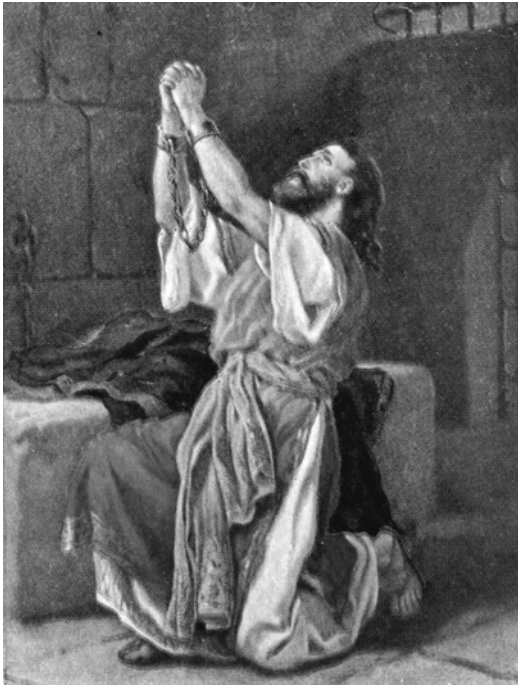
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First & Second Samuel, First & Second Kings, First & Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentation, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi.

ANSWERS: 1. The temple 2. Good 3. Moses’ brass serpent 4. Isaiah 5. Laid it before the Lord. 6. God’s angel 7. Prepare to die. 8. 15 9. Sun moved backward 10. Manasseh

King Josiah

II Kings 21-23

When King Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh became king over Judah. Manasseh was an evil man. He built idols and high places and caused the people to worship idols in Judah. Manasseh was probably the most evil king who ruled over Judah, and he did much that was displeasing to God during his 55 year reign. The Lord allowed this to continue for some time, but He promised that Judah would be destroyed because of their sins. Manasseh was taken as a captive by the Assyrians, but he repented of his sins and begged God to help him. God heard Manasseh's prayer and the king returned to Jerusalem. He tore down the idols and threw them outside the city and made the people worship God. When Manasseh died, his son Amon became king, and he did evil in the sight of God. He brought back the idols and caused the people to sin. Amon was killed by his servants, and his young son, Josiah, became the king over Judah.



Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he loved the Lord God. When Josiah was 26 years old, he sent one of his scribes to the house of the Lord to see the priest, Hilkiah. The scribe, Shaphan, told the priest to take the money which was given by the people at the temple and use it to pay the workmen and carpenters who were repairing the temple. Hilkiah told Shaphan about a book which had been found in the temple. It was the book of



the law of Moses! Shaphan took the book and read it to King Josiah. When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes and said to the priest and his servants, “Go and pray to God for me and all the people. God’s anger is great against us because our fathers did not obey the words written in this book of law.” These servants went to see Huldah the prophetess and asked her what the Lord God said concerning the book which had been found.

The prophetess said, “Go and tell the king that the Lord is very angry and will bring much evil on the land of Judah and on the people, because they have not obeyed the words which are written in the book of law. They have turned away to worship other gods, and God’s anger will come against them. Tell Josiah that the Lord has heard him and seen how he is tender-hearted and serves only God. The trouble and evil will not come on the land while Josiah lives, because Josiah is good and has not done evil.” The king’s servants returned and told Josiah all that the prophetess said.

King Josiah gathered all the elders of Judah and went into the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, and all the people came also. Josiah read to the people the book of law which had been found in the temple. Josiah made a covenant with the Lord, promising to walk in the ways of the Lord and keep all His commandments and laws. All the people of Judah joined with Josiah in making a covenant with God.

Josiah told the priests and doorkeepers of the temple to bring out all the vessels and furniture that were used in idol worship. He took these outside the city and burned them. Josiah had all the idol priests killed and burned. He went throughout the whole land destroying



Level 16C

everything that related to idol worship. He even went as far as Samaria and destroyed every idol, priest, and article of idol worship in the whole land. [You may remember that these things had been prophesied by a young prophet who spoke to Jeroboam.]

When the cleansing of the land was complete, Josiah commanded that the feast of



the Passover be celebrated. This feast had not been celebrated for many, many years. In the eighteenth year of Josiah, Judah celebrated the feast of the Passover as was written in the book of the laws of Moses.

There was no king like Josiah who turned to the Lord God with all his heart. However, the Lord did not turn His anger away from Judah. God promised that Judah would be removed from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh. God knew that Josiah loved Him, and He did not make Josiah live through the evil which was coming upon Judah. King Josiah was killed by Neco, king of Egypt, and buried in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, was made the new king of Judah.

God always punishes men for the evil things they do. Today God punishes us when we do evil. When we repent of our sins and try very hard to live for God, He forgives us and helps us live better lives for Him.

STORY QUIZ

1. Who became the king of Judah when Hezekiah died?
2. Who took Manasseh as a captive?
3. What grandson of Manasseh became king when Amon died?
4. How old was Josiah when he became king of Judah?
5. What did Josiah tell the priests to do with the temple collection?
6. Who was the priest at the time of Josiah?
7. Who was the scribe of Josiah?
8. What did the workmen find in the temple rubble?
9. What feast did Josiah command Judah to celebrate?
10. What prophetess told Josiah that God would send punishment on Judah?

Memory Verse Level Sixteen

Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. Rather worship the Lord your God; it is He who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.
II Kings 17:38-39

Memory Goal Level Sixteen: Books of the Old Testament

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First & Second Samuel, First & Second Kings, First & Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentation, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi.

ANSWERS: 1. Manasseh 2. Assyrians 3. Josiah 4. 8 years 5. Pay the workmen
6. Hilkiah 7. Shaphan 8. Book of Moses 9. Passover 10. Huldah

THE FALL OF JUDAH

II Kings 23-25, II Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 1-40

During the rule of King Josiah in Judah, God sent prophets to warn the people about their sins. The prophet Jeremiah began his work during the rule of Josiah. Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah the priest, began his preaching ministry when he was a young man. Zephaniah and Habakkuk were other prophets who worked during Jeremiah's time. Jeremiah was the prophet to the people of Judah through the reign of the last kings in Judah.

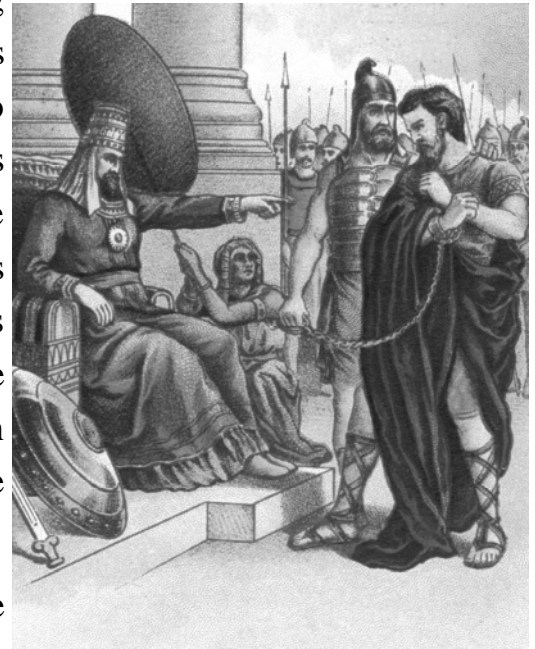


When Josiah died, his son Jehoahaz became king, and he ruled only three months. He was taken captive by Neco, Pharaoh of Egypt, and his brother Jehoiakim was made the king of Judah. Jehoiakim was evil and did not do right in the eyes of God. Jehoiakim had no respect for the Lord and His word. One day when the words of Jeremiah were being read to the king, he became so angry that he cut Jeremiah's scroll and burned it! Jeremiah was God's prophet, and he warned the king and the people many times about the coming destruction of Judah.

The nation of Babylon was growing very strong and had become the most powerful nation on earth under the leadership of King Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim was paying tribute to the king of Egypt, and he taxed the people heavily to pay the tribute. After ruling eight or nine years, Jehoiakim became subject to Nebuchadnezzar. He served him for three year before rebelling. God sent the Babylonians, the Syrians, the Moabites, and the Ammonites against Jerusalem to punish them, and Jehoiakim was taken in chains to Babylon. He died in a Babylonian prison. Many young noblemen were taken as captives to Babylon. Among those taken was a young man named Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar took some of the holy vessels from the temple in Jerusalem and carried them away to Babylon. Jehoiachin, the young son of

Jehoiakim, became king of Judah when his father died.

By now Babylon ruled most of the world, even the mighty nation of Egypt had fallen to Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoichin did evil in the sight of God and refused to listen to the prophets, so God sent Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem again. Jerusalem was surrounded by the Babylonian army, and no one could enter or leave the city. After ruling only three months and ten days in Jerusalem, King Jehoiachin surrendered himself, his family, and his servants to Nebuchadnezzar, and they were taken into Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar took away all the treasures of the house of God and the king's house, all the vessels of gold. Many people of Judah were taken as captives into the land of Babylon. All the king's family and servants, all the mighty men of valor, the craftsmen, all the strong, able-bodied men were taken into captivity. Ezekiel the prophet was among the captives taken in this second group.



Nebuchadnezzar appointed Jehoichin's uncle (Zedekiah) as the new king of Judah. Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar in his ninth year, so Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem again. He put Jerusalem under siege, and soon famine in the city was very great. Since the Babylonian army kept anyone from entering or leaving the city, the food supply ran out. King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah, the prophet, and asked him to pray for Jerusalem. Jeremiah told the king that the city would be captured and burned.

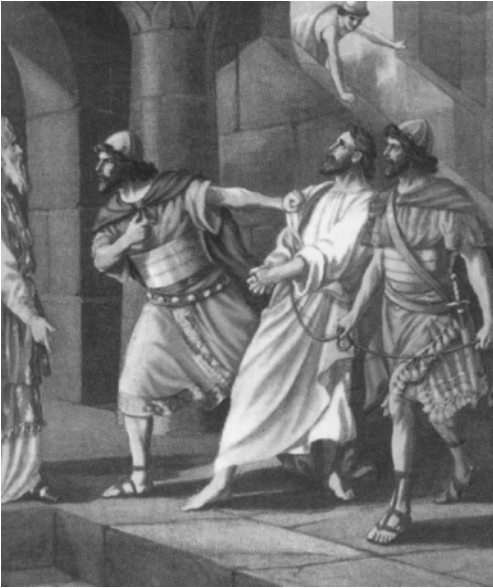


Some of the noblemen heard this, and they asked for permission to kill Jeremiah. The king told them to put Jeremiah into a dry well in the city and leave him there to die. One of the king's slaves heard about Jeremiah, and he asked for permission to rescue Jeremiah. The king granted permission, so the slave took thirty other men, removed Jeremiah from the well, and put him in prison.

King Zedekiah sent secretly to Jeremiah asking him

Level 16D

what was going to happen to Jerusalem. Jeremiah answered, “If I tell you, you will get angry and kill me.” Zedekiah promised that Jeremiah would be safe, so Jeremiah said, “You will not listen to me, so why should I tell you what is going to happen?” Finally, Jeremiah told Zedekiah if he would surrender to the Babylonian king, then he and his family would be safe and the city would not be burned. Zedekiah said he was afraid to surrender, because he was afraid the Jews already living in Babylonian captivity would kill him. Jeremiah told the king that he would be safe if he surrendered, but Zedekiah refused to listen.



The prophet went back to prison and remained there until the city of Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar’s army. When the enemy broke down the walls, Zedekiah and his men ran away, trying to escape through a back gate, but they were caught, and Zedekiah’s sons were killed. Zedekiah’s eyes were put out, and he was taken to prison in Babylon where, later, he died. The Babylonian army burned the king’s palace, the temple of God, and all the great houses in Jerusalem. All the people of Judah were taken into captivity except a few poor farmers. Jeremiah was left in Jerusalem with those few poor farmers.

Jeremiah sent a message to the captives in Babylon. He told them to build houses, plant fields, marry and have children. He promised that God would allow them to return to the land of Judah after seventy years of captivity in Babylon. Ezekiel preached to the people in captivity and told them to make a life there, and they would return home after seventy years.

In this lesson we can see how God kept His promise to destroy Judah and Jerusalem because of the sins of the people. God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to take the city and punish the people, but God had promised David that his descendants would rule forever! Did God break His promise to David? No! King Jehoiachin, a descendant of David, was taken into captivity when he was young. He lived in prison for thirty-seven years, then he was brought from prison into the Babylonian king’s palace. He lived as a prince in

the palace for the rest of his life. His son, Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel. This same Zerubbabel was a leader of the first group of people who returned at the end of the seventy years! God kept His promise to David by allowing David's descendant to remain alive and in a high position. It is through David's family that Jesus, the Son of God, was born. Jesus, descendant of David, is the KING of God's kingdom which is the Church! God said David's descendants would rule forever. Jesus became the king and will remain king of all the earth until God sends Him back to earth to take the faithful people home to heaven.

STORY QUIZ

1. Who was a prophet from the days of Josiah through the days of King Zedekiah?
2. What son of Josiah cut up the scroll of Jeremiah?
3. Who was the king of Babylon?
4. What king of Judah died in Babylonian captivity?
5. What young man of Judah was taken in the first group of captives?
6. What king of Judah surrendered and lived in prison in Babylon for 37 years?
7. What prophet of God was taken captive with Jehoiachin?
8. What did Nebuchadnezzar take from God's temple?
9. Who did Nebuchadnezzar establish as puppet king in Judah?
10. How long would Judah remain in captivity?

Memory Verse Level Sixteen

Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. Rather worship the Lord your God; it is He who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies. II Kings 17:38-39

Memory Goal Level Sixteen: The Books of the Old Testament

ANSWERS: 1. Jeremiah 2. Jehoiakim 3. Nebuchadnezzar 4. Jehoiakim
 5. Daniel 6. Jehoiachin 7. Ezekiel 8. Sacred vessels 9. Zedekiah 10. 70 years

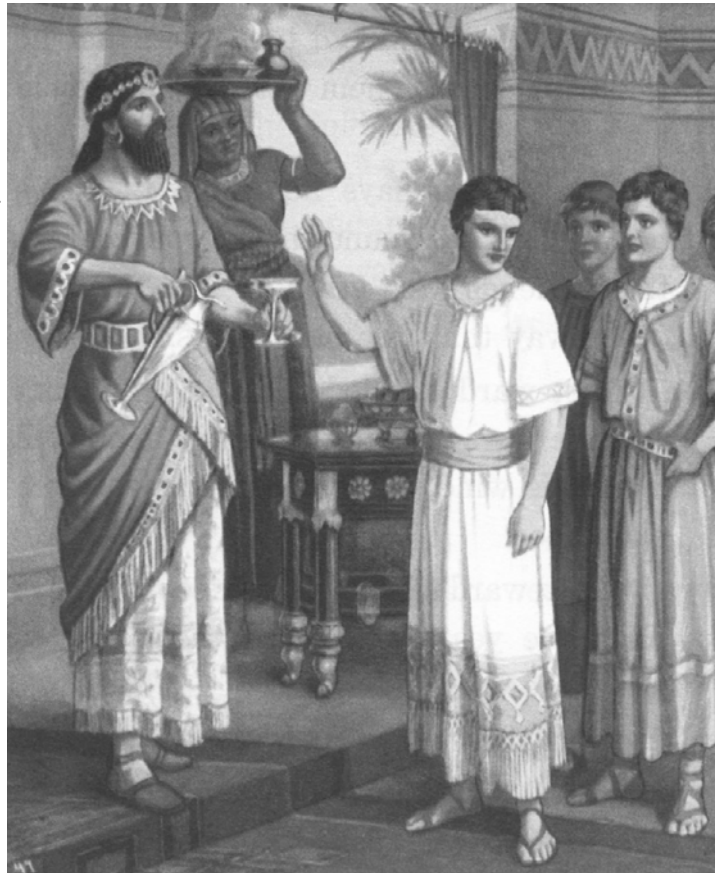
Daniel, A Prophet in Captivity

Daniel 1-3

When Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, captured Judah, he took many people of Judah into his land as captives. There were four young noblemen among the first group of captives named Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Nebuchadnezzar commanded Ashpenaz, his chief official, to bring some of the young royal noblemen into the king's court. They were to be trained and taught the history, language, and literature of Babylon. Daniel and his three friends were among those chosen to train for service in the court. The king ordered that all the young men be fed rich foods and wines from the king's table. The training and teaching was to last for three years. Daniel and his friends were given new Babylonian names. Daniel was called Belteshazzar, Hananiah was called Shadrach, Mishael was called Meshach, and Azariah was called Abednego. *[For some reason Daniel's Hebrew name is the one with which we are familiar, while the other three men are more familiarly known by their Babylonian names.]*

Daniel and his three friends decided that they would not eat the rich food from the king's table. God granted Daniel favor in the eyes of the chief official, and he told Ashpenaz that he would not eat from the king's table. Ashpenaz said, 'If you do not eat the rich food and drink the king's wine, you will look sickly, and the king will kill me!' Daniel asked his overseer to give him and his friends a ten day test. For ten days they would eat only vegetables and drink water. At the end of the test period Ashpenaz saw that the four young men were fatter and healthier than all the



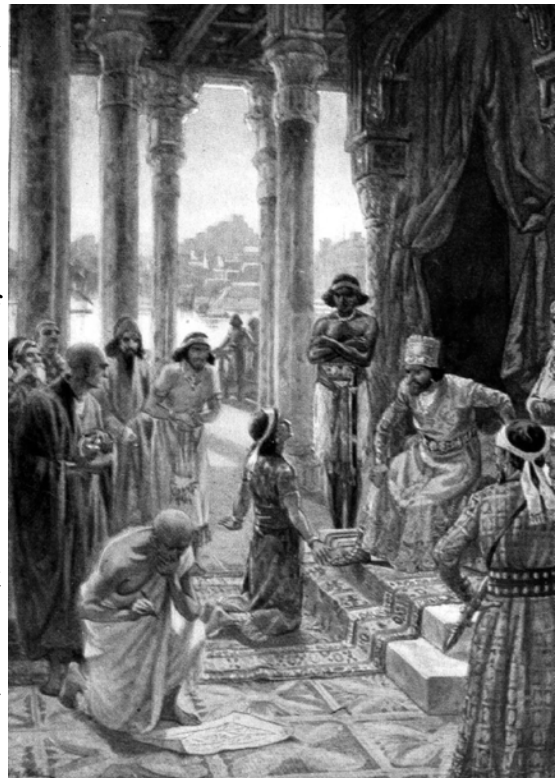
Level 17A

other young men, so he allowed Daniel and his three friends to continue eating their simple foods instead of the king's rich foods. God gave Daniel and his friends knowledge and intelligence in all their studies, and He gave Daniel the ability to understand and interpret dreams. After three years of training, the young noblemen were taken to meet King Nebuchadnezzar. The king found Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be ten times better than all the magicians in Babylon. So Daniel and his three friends were taken into the king's personal service.

[The foods which Nebuchadnezzar served the men in training was most probably foods which were forbidden by the law of Moses. When Daniel refused to eat that food, God was pleased and rewarded the four men by making them better than all the others.]

One night King Nebuchadnezzar had some troublesome dreams which bothered him very much. He called all the wise men of Babylon and told them that they must tell him the meaning of his dreams. He promised that the man who told the meaning would receive gifts and have great honor, but if they could not tell the meaning, they would die! The wise men told the king that they could tell the meaning of the dream.

Nebuchadnezzar said, "I know you! You will probably make up some story and say it is the interpretation of the dream so that I will not kill you! Therefore, I will not tell you the dream! You must tell me the dream and its meaning!" The wise men said that it was an impossible thing and no man could do it. The king was very angry and sent out an order that all the wise men were to be killed. Daniel asked the king if he could have time to ask God for the dream and its meaning. Nebuchadnezzar agreed to give Daniel time to pray. Daniel and his three friends were among the wise men of Babylon, and they would be killed if the dream and its meaning were not made known to the king. Daniel and his three friends prayed to God, and God gave Daniel a vision, revealing the king's dream and its

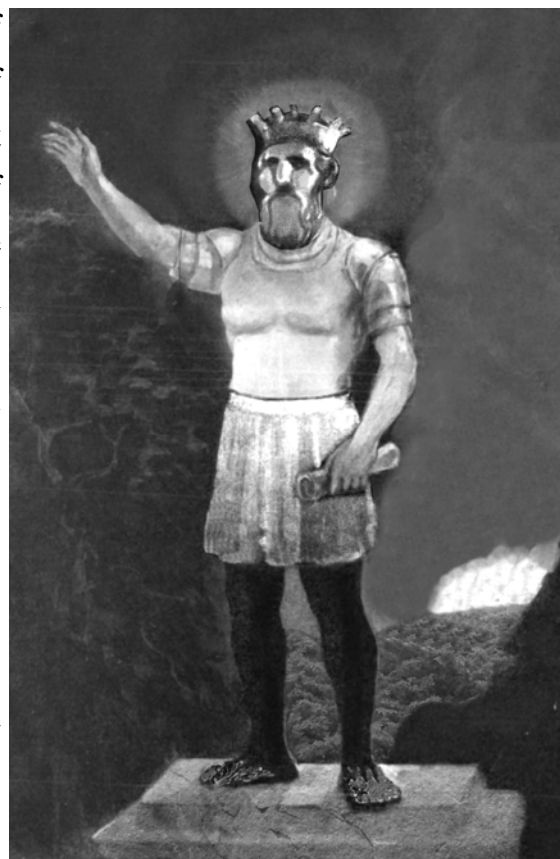


interpretation.

Daniel was allowed to go before the king to tell the dream and its interpretation. Daniel said, “No wise men could tell you what you want to know, but there is a God in heaven who knows all things. He has told me your dream and its interpretation so that you will know of things which will take place in the years to come.” Daniel then told Nebuchadnezzar the dream and its meaning.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

Daniel said, “King Nebuchadnezzar, you dreamed you were looking out and saw a very large spectacular statue. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, the breast and arms were of silver, the thighs were made of bronze, the legs were of iron, and the feet were of iron and clay. As you watched, a stone was cut out (without hands), and it hit the statue on the feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then, the whole statue crushed into dust, and the wind blew it all away. The stone that hit the statue began to grow, and it became a mountain and filled the whole earth.”



Daniel’s Interpretation

Daniel continued, “Your dream was sent by God to tell you of things that will happen in the years to come. Now here is the meaning of the dream. The head of gold is your kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar. It is the greatest and most powerful kingdom. After you there will arise a lesser kingdom; it is the breast and arms of silver. Then a third kingdom will arise; it is the thighs of bronze. The fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron, and it shall crush all the other kingdoms. All these kingdoms will rule over the whole world for a time. The feet of iron and clay are a divided

Level 17A

kingdom. It will be as strong as iron, but weak and breakable like clay. During these days, God will set up His kingdom which will never be destroyed. The stone which grew into a mountain, is God's kingdom. It will grow and fill all the earth. It will put an end to all other world-wide kingdoms."

When Nebuchadnezzar heard what Daniel had to say, he bowed down to Daniel and gave him many gifts. The king said, "Surely your God is the God of all gods, since He has been able to tell you all these things!" Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel the chief of all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel asked the king to appoint his three friends as ministers over the land. Daniel and his faithful friends reached very high positions in the land of their captivity because God was with them and helped them.

Today, world history tells us who the kings and kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream were. On page 318 you will find a drawing of a statue and the dream of Nebuchadnezzar with its interpretation. Each of these kingdoms came to power, just as Daniel said, and each kingdom ruled over the whole world. The stone, God's kingdom, came to power with Jesus Christ. He set up the kingdom of God which is the church. It includes all people of every land and it will last forever. God showed His power to Nebuchadnezzar through Daniel, and everything Daniel told the king really happened. You will probably study some or all of these kingdoms in your high school world history classes.

King Nebuchadnezzar built a golden image which was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide, and he set it up in Babylon. He called for all the governors and chiefs and ministers of the land to come to the dedication of the image. When all the people were assembled, the heralds declared, "When the music begins to play everyone must bow down to the golden image." Nebuchadnezzar had given orders that any person who would not bow to the image would be thrown into the fiery furnace.



When the music started the people bowed and worshiped, everyone except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Some men went to the king and told him that three Hebrew men would not bow down. They refused to worship the king's idol. Nebuchadnezzar was very angry and sent for the three men. He said, "Now, when the music starts to play you will bow down, or I will put you into the fiery furnace, and NO god can deliver you from it!"

The three men said, "Our God is able to deliver us, but even if He does not deliver us from the furnace, we will not worship your golden image." Nebuchadnezzar was very angry and commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. Then he commanded that the three men be tied up and thrown into the furnace. The king's servants who threw the Hebrews into the furnace were killed because the fire was so hot! Daniel's three friends were thrown into the blazing fire. As the king watched, he saw not three but four men walking around in the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar ran to the furnace and called, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Servants of the Most High God, come out of the furnace." The three faithful men walked out of the fire and were not burned or harmed in any way. They did not even smell like smoke.



Nebuchadnezzar declared that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was indeed great and very powerful. He said, "Your God sent His angel to save you from the fire!" The king commanded that any person who spoke against God would be torn limb from limb and their houses would be destroyed. The king appointed Daniel's three friends as high officials in Babylon, and they prospered greatly in the land of their captivity. God protected His three servants because they refused to serve an idol. He will protect us, too, when we stand up for what is right and good.

STORY QUIZ

1. What was the names of Daniel's 3 friends?
2. How long were Daniel and his friends tested with the plain foods?
3. What did Nebuchadnezzar command his wise men to do?
4. Who told Nebuchadnezzar what he wanted to know?
5. Of what was Nebuchadnezzar's dream statue made?
6. What did the stone in the dream mean?
7. What was meant by the mountain in the dream?
8. Who refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image?
9. How many men did Nebuchadnezzar see in the furnace?
10. Who saved the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace?

Memory Verse Level Seventeen

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

Memory Goal Level 17

The dream foretold the world powers from Nebuchadnezzar until God established His worldwide kingdom.

HEAD OF GOLD = Babylonian Empire (under Nebuchadnezzar)

BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER = Medo-Persian Empire (under Cyrus and Darius)

BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRONZE = Greek Empire (under Alexander the Great)

LEGS OF IRON = Roman Empire (under the Emperors)

FEET OF IRON AND CLAY = Roman Empire with Jewish self-government.

THE GREAT STONE which crushed the statue and then grew into a great mountain to stand forever = Jesus Christ and the establishment of the church which is the worldwide kingdom of God.

Answers: 1. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego 2. 10 days 3. Interpret his dream
4. Daniel 5. Gold, Silver, Bronze, Iron, & Clay 6. Kingdoms
7. Jesus' Church 8. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego 9. Four 10. God

Daniel Serves God

Daniel 4-6

Daniel, a young nobleman of Judah, was taken into Babylonian captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel loved and served God, so God blessed him and helped him. Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, loved and served the Lord God, and He sent His angel to rescue them from the fiery furnace. All four of these young men gained a high position of authority in the land of their captivity.

When King Nebuchadnezzar died, his grandson Belshazzar became the new king



over Babylon. Belshazzar held a great feast for his friends. He ordered that the vessels of gold which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem be brought out. The king and his guests drank wine and toasted their gods from these holy temple vessels. Everyone was having a grand time, drinking and making merry, when suddenly the

fingers of a man's hand appeared and started writing on the wall of the palace. When Belshazzar saw this hand, he became very pale, his body became weak, and his knees knocked together in fright. Belshazzar called all his wise men and ordered them to interpret the writing on the wall. "Whoever gives me an interpretation will be rewarded with a purple robe and a gold necklace, and he would be made third ruler over all the land." All the wise men of Babylon came and tried to read the writing, and when they could not interpret it, the king was even more afraid. The queen, Belshazzar's mother, told the king that there was one man in Babylon who could tell what the writing meant.

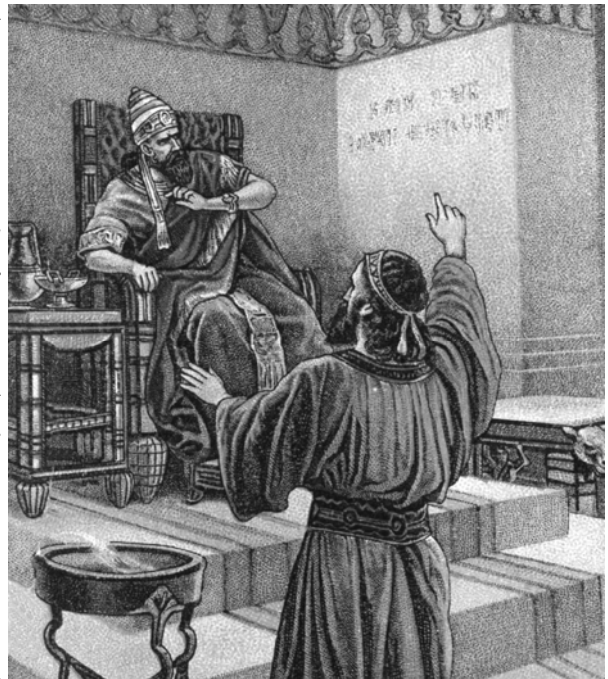
She told him how Daniel had used his great power to help Nebuchadnezzar, so Belshazzar sent for him. When Daniel appeared before King Belshazzar, the king told

Level 17B

him that he had heard of the great powers that Daniel possessed. He promised that he would make Daniel third ruler over the land if he could interpret the handwriting on the wall. Daniel told Belshazzar to keep the gifts or give them to some other person, but he would freely tell the king the meaning of the words on the wall. Daniel said, “The God of Israel gave your father, Nebuchadnezzar, great power and authority, and God allowed him to rule over all the world. When Nebuchadnezzar became proud and vain, God took away all his power. The king was driven out of the palace, away from all mankind. Nebuchadnezzar lived as a beast of the field and ate grass like an animal until he recognized that God is the Most High God of all the earth. When he called upon God, he was allowed to return to his kingdom and all its glory.”

Daniel continued, “Now, King Belshazzar, you knew all this, yet you have not humbled yourself before God. You have brought the holy vessels of the holy temple into your house. You and your friends have praised other gods while drinking from the sacred vessels, but you have not praised and glorified the God of all the earth! God sent this message to you. The words on the wall say, MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN. Now this is the interpretation of those words. MENE means that God has numbered the days of your kingdom and put it to an end! TEKEL means that you have been weighed on the scales and you are defective. PERES means that your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.”

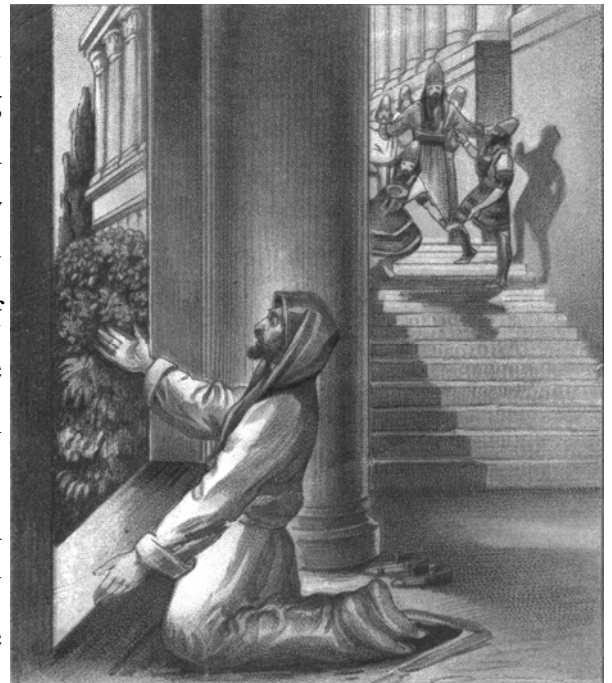
King Belshazzar ordered that Daniel be given the promised reward, and he proclaimed that Daniel was the third ruler of the land. That very same night Belshazzar died, and Darius, the Mede, became ruler over the kingdom which Belshazzar had ruled. King Darius set up one hundred twenty men as chiefs to rule over different areas of the kingdom and three men to serve as governors over the one hundred twenty chiefs. Daniel was one of the governors. Soon his wisdom and understanding made him stand out as a better man than the others. Darius planned to make Daniel a ruler over all the





kingdom, and the other governors and chiefs were jealous. They began to look for some way to make Daniel look bad to the king. They could find no wrong in Daniel's work, so they decided that the only way to trap Daniel was in matters concerning his God. These men went to King Darius and praised him highly. They told him that he was greater than any man or god. They encouraged Darius to make a law decreeing it unlawful for any person to ask favors from any man or god other than the king. The king was so puffed up by this flattery that he made the law saying, "No man may ask favors of any god or man, except King Darius, for thirty days. If any man breaks this law, he will be thrown into the lions' den."

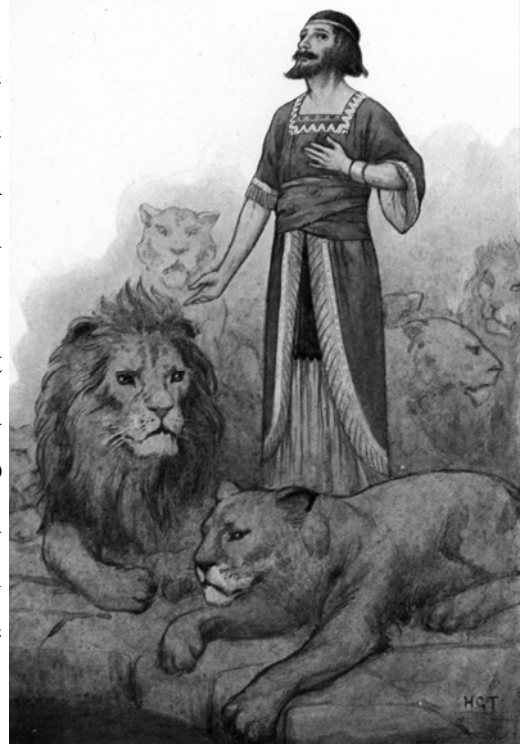
Three times each day Daniel went onto his roof and faced Jerusalem while he prayed to the Lord God of heaven. Daniel's enemies knew of this custom, and they watched him to see if he would disobey the new law. Just as he had always done, Daniel went up to pray three times every day. The governors and chiefs went to see King Darius. They knew that he loved Daniel, and they were very sly about accusing Daniel. They said, "O King, did you not make a new law saying it is wrong for any man to ask favors of any other god or man?" The king agreed that he had made the law. Then the men said, "The man Daniel pays no attention to you and your laws! He goes up on his roof and prays to his God three times every day!" King Darius was very upset because he had high regard for Daniel. He tried to think of some way to save Daniel, but according to the law of the Medes and Persians, no law made by the king could be changed. Darius could not find a way to help Daniel, so he was forced to have him



Level 17B

thrown into the den of lions. Darius said to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, will save you from the lions.” A stone was placed over the lions’ den, and it was sealed with the king’s ring and the rings of the other officials, so that no man could come and rescue Daniel from the lions.

The king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. He could not sleep because he was worried about Daniel. Early the next morning, Darius ran to the lions’ den and shouted, “Daniel, has your God been able to deliver you from the lions?” Daniel answered, “My King, God sent His angel to close the lions’ jaws! I am safe and unharmed.” The king was very happy and commanded that Daniel be taken from



the den. King Darius commanded that Daniel’s enemies and their families be thrown into the den of lions. But God’s angel did not protect them. They were tore to pieces by the lions before they ever reached the bottom of the pit.

Darius made a new law stating that all people were to fear and tremble before the living God of Daniel. Daniel was a powerful and successful man in Babylon all the days of his life. He was a prophet of God, speaking about God to all who were in the King’s court. He foretold the coming of other powerful nations and finally the coming of the kingdom of Christ, which is the church.

Daniel knew that it was unlawful for him to pray to God, but he knew that it was right to pray. He chose to obey God rather than men, and God took care of him. Just like his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel knew that God was able to protect him from all things. Sometimes we must make a choice whether to do what God says or do what the world says. We need to be like Daniel and his friends. We need to trust in God with all our might and let Him take care of us.

STORY QUIZ

1. What grandson of Nebuchadnezzar became king?
2. What did Belshazzar and his friends use for drinking to their idol gods?
3. What did Belshazzar see that made his knees knock?
4. What words did the hand write?
5. Who interpreted the handwriting?
6. Who became king when Belshazzar died?
7. Darius made Daniel one of how many governors?
8. How often did Daniel pray?
9. Where was Daniel put because he prayed to God?
10. Who saved Daniel from the lions?

Memory Verse Level Seventeen

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

Memory Goal Level 17

The dream foretold the world powers from Nebuchadnezzar until God established His worldwide kingdom.

HEAD OF GOLD = Babylonian Empire (under Nebuchadnezzar)

BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER = Medo-Persian Empire (under Cyrus and Darius)

BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRONZE = Greek Empire (under Alexander the Great)

LEGS OF IRON = Roman Empire (under the Emperors)

FEET OF IRON AND CLAY = Roman Empire with Jewish self-government.

THE GREAT STONE which crushed the statue and then grew into a great mountain to stand forever = Jesus Christ and the establishment of the church which is the worldwide kingdom of God.

ANSWERS: 1. Belshazzar 2. Holy temple vessels 3. A hand
 4. Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin 5. Daniel 6. Darius the Mede 7. 3
 8. 3 times a day 9. Lions' den 10. God

ESTHER

Esther 1-10

During the years of Judah's captivity, King Ahasuerus of Persia (also known as Xerxes) gave a royal banquet for all the officials of his provinces. His wife, Queen Vashti, also gave a banquet for the women of the officials. On the seventh day of the banquet, when Ahasuerus and his guests had become drunk with wine, the king sent for his queen. He wanted to show her beauty to the men at the banquet. Queen Vashti refused to obey the king's command and would not go out to display herself. King Ahasuerus was very angry and asked his wise men what should be done about his disobedient wife. The wise men advised the king to banish Vashti from his presence forever and make an example of her. They said, "The actions of the queen will become known to all women, and they will all start disobeying their husbands! You must make an example of Queen Vashti, then all women will honor their husbands!" The king liked this suggestion and banished Vashti from his presence forever.

Soon the king became lonely for his wife, and one of his servants suggested that a new queen be chosen to replace Vashti. All the beautiful young women of Susa (the capital of Persia) were gathered and brought into the king's harem. Among those taken



was a very beautiful Jewish woman named Esther (Her Jewish name was Hadassah.). Esther was the niece of Mordecai, of the family of King Saul. Mordecai was like a father to Esther because her parents were dead. Mordecai instructed Esther to tell no one that she was a Jew. Esther became the

favorite of the chief harem-keeper, and he gave her the most honored position in the harem. According to the customs of the Persian, the women of the harem prepared for an

entire year before meeting the king. Finally, Esther's turn to see the king came, and she followed the good advice of the harem-keeper concerning her behavior with the king. King Ahasuerus loved Esther very much and made her the queen in place of Vashti.

Mordecai passed near the palace every day so he could hear news of his beloved niece. One day he heard two men plotting to kill the king. Mordecai told Esther of the plot. Esther told the king, and the two men were caught and hung. Mordecai's actions were written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings.



Haman, an official in Persia, was promoted, and the king ordered that all people bow to Haman. Mordecai was at the gate when Haman passed by, and he refused to bow to the man. Haman was furious! When he learned that Mordecai was a Jew, he decided to somehow destroy all the Jews living in Persia! Day after day, month after month Mordecai's refusal to bow to Haman increased the fury of Haman. Finally, Haman went to the king and said, "There are many people living in this kingdom who have laws that are different from ours. They do not obey the king's laws! It would be in the best interest of the kingdom to destroy these Jews." The king listened to Haman and commanded that the Jews be destroyed. Letters were

sent throughout the whole land stating that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month all Jews were to be killed and their property taken.

When the Jews heard of the new decree, there was great confusion and weeping. Mordecai put on sackcloth and went to the gates of the king's palace, weeping and praying. Esther heard that he was there and sent messengers to find out what was troubling her uncle. Mordecai sent Esther a copy of the new decree about the coming destruction of all Jews in Persia. He said, "Go to



Level 17C

the king and beg him not to do this.” Esther said, “How can I go to the king? Everyone knows the customs Persia. If I go into the king’s presence when he has not sent for me, I will be put to death unless he hold out his golden scepter toward me.” Mordecai said, “You are a Jew. Don’t you know that you will die also, even if you are in the palace? Now, go to the king and beg for the lives of your people. Who knows? Maybe you became queen of this land for this very purpose!” Esther listened to her uncle and said, “I will go, and if I die, I die!”

Esther prepared herself, and on the third day she went into the presence of the king. When he saw Esther standing in the court, King Ahasuerus lifted his golden scepter toward her. He said to her, “What

is troubling you? Tell me what you want. I will give you anything, up to half of the kingdom!” Esther said, “I would like you to come to a banquet I have prepared for you and Haman.” The king quickly sent for Haman, so they could go to Esther’s banquet. As they were eating, the king said, “Esther, what do you want? Tell me and I will give you whatever it is.” Esther said, “If you will, please come to another banquet tomorrow, and I



will tell you my request.” Haman was extremely flattered that the queen had include him in her invitations.



As Haman left the palace, he saw Mordecai and was very angry when Mordecai refused to bow to him. He controlled his anger and went on home where he told his family about his great honor in the kingdom. Then he said, “But I will not be happy until Mordecai and the Jews are dead!” His wife and his family encouraged him to build a gallows seventy-five feet high and ask the king to hang Mordecai on it. Haman liked this idea, so he had



the gallows built.

During the night, King Ahasuerus could not sleep, so he read from the books of the Chronicles of the Kings. He read about Mordecai reporting the two men who had planned to kill the king. The next day Haman entered the king's court planning to ask him to hang Mordecai on the gallows. When the king saw Haman, he said, "What should be done for a man who deserves great honor?" Haman thought, "The king wants to honor me!" He said to

Ahasuerus, "The man should be clothed in a royal robe and ride on a royal horse through the city. Let one of the royal princes lead the horse proclaiming honor for the man." The king said, "Quickly, get the robes and the horse as you have said and give them to Mordecai, the Jew. Lead the horse through the city proclaiming honor for Mordecai." Haman had no choice but to obey the king and honored his hated enemy, Mordecai.



When Haman and the king went to Esther's banquet, the king asked, "Esther, what is your request?" Esther said, "O King, if I have found favor with you, save me and my people. We will be destroyed unless you help us!" The king said, "Who is the man who plans this terrible thing?" Esther said, "My wicked enemy is Haman!" The king was very angry and went into the garden, but Haman stayed to plead with the queen. When the king returned, Haman had fallen on the couch where Esther sat, so he thought Haman was attacking her. Esther's servant said, "Haman built a high gallows to hang Mordecai." Ahasuerus said, "Hang Haman on it!" So they hung Haman on the gallows he had built for Mordecai.

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The king gave Esther all of Haman's property. She told the king that Mordecai was her uncle, so he was brought into the palace and given Haman's position in the kingdom. The law of the Medes and Persians would not allow any law to be changed. Therefore, Mordecai was given permission to send letters, sealed with the king's ring, to all the provinces of the kingdom. He gave permission to the Jews to gather together and defend themselves against all who attacked them on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. On that day the Jews defended themselves and won victory over those who hated them. Mordecai became a very powerful man in the kingdom of Persia. He declared that the Jews celebrate a feast every year to remember what had happened to them and how they had been saved. Queen Esther wrote a command confirming the celebration, which is called Purim.



When Esther became a queen in the land of her captivity, she had no idea of the great thing she would do for her people. This young woman bravely risked her own life to save the lives of her people. During your life there may be a time when you must risk your own life for something or someone. Remember Esther and stand up for what is right!

[The book of Esther does not contain the word GOD, but we can easily see how God was working in Esther's life to save His people, the Jews.]

STORY QUIZ

1. Who replaced Vashti, queen of Persia?
2. Who was Esther's guardian and uncle?
3. What nationality was Esther?
4. What Persian man hated Mordecai?
5. What did Haman want done to all Jews?
6. Who told the Esther of the plot to murder the Jews?
7. What did Ahasuerus offer Esther?
8. Who went to a banquet at Esther's house?
9. What punishment did Haman receive?
10. Who took Haman's place in the king's court?

Memory Verse Level Seventeen

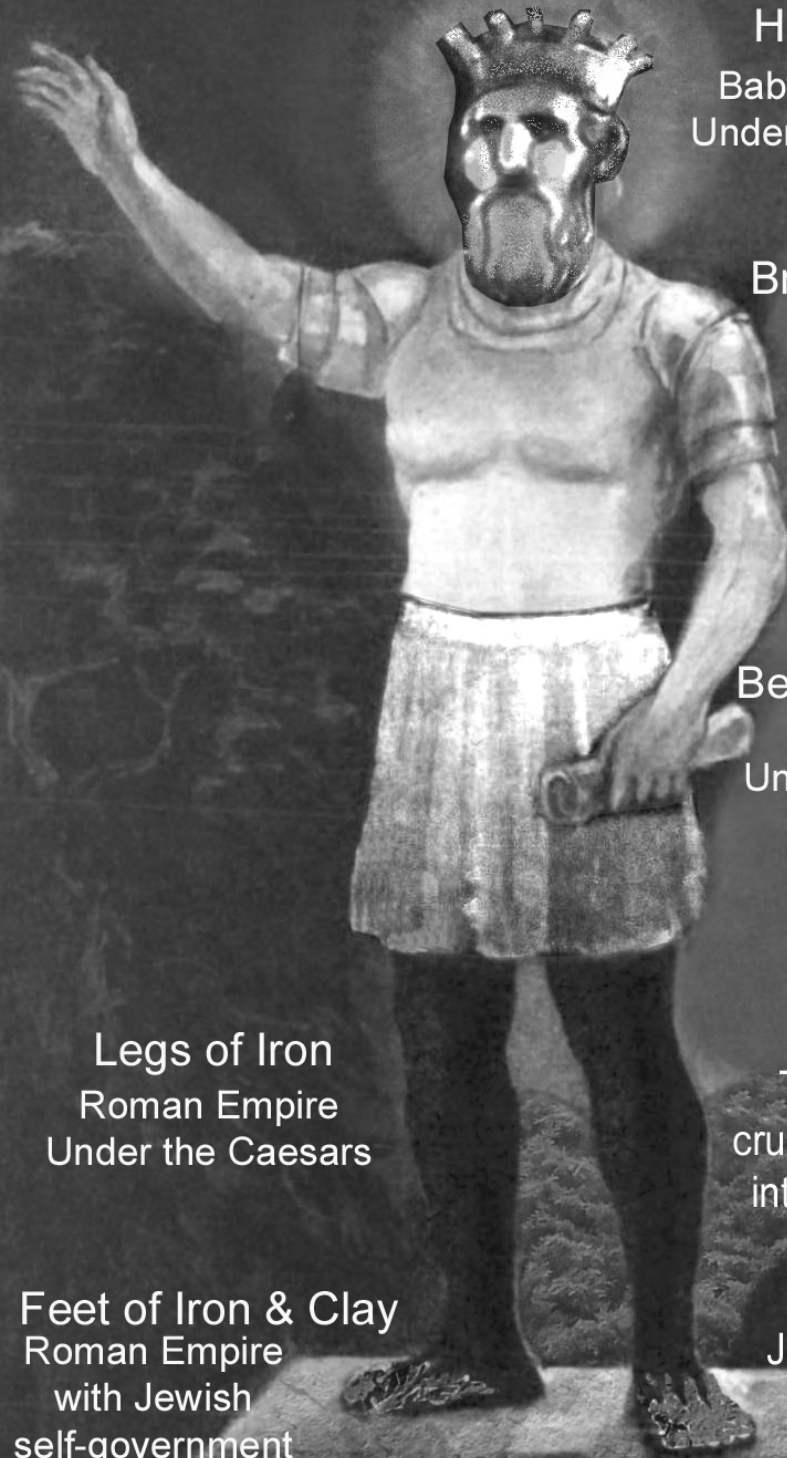
Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

Memory Goal Seventeen

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: See next page.

ANSWERS: 1. Esther 2. Mordecai 3. Jewish 4. Haman 5. Kill them
6. Mordecai 7. Up to half the kingdom 8. Ahasuerus and Haman
9. He was hung 10. Mordecai

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Statue
and Daniel's Interpretation



Head of Gold
Babylonian Kingdom
Under Nebuchadnezzar

Breast & Arms of Silver
Medo-Persian Empire
Under Cyrus & Darius

Belly & Thighs of Bronze
Greek Empire
Under Alexander the Great

Legs of Iron
Roman Empire
Under the Caesars

The Great Stone which
crushed the statue and grew
into a mountain that fill the
whole earth.

Feet of Iron & Clay
Roman Empire
with Jewish
self-government

JESUS CHRIST and His
Kingdom (the church)

RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY

Ezra 1-10

Before we begin the main part of this lesson, let's look back at what has happened to Israel. The nation of Israel was established as a result of God's promise to Abraham. God brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt and gave them the land of Canaan. Because of the sins of King Solomon, God caused the kingdom of Israel to be divided into two nations, Israel and Judah. Many kings ruled over both of these nations. Israel was finally destroyed, and the people were taken into Assyrian captivity. They were very sinful and worshiped idols instead of the true God.



Judah also sinned by worshiping idols, and God promised to send the Babylonians against the southern nation of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and took almost all of the people into captivity. God sent prophets to warn the people of the coming captivity, but the people refused to listen and repent. God raised up three major prophets to serve the people during the years of the captivity.

Jeremiah was left in Jerusalem to prophesy to those remaining in Judah. **Ezekiel** was a captive in Babylon, and he prophesied to the common people living in captivity. **Daniel** was the prophet to those in the king's court. These prophets helped the descendants of Abraham remember that they were God's people. The prophets taught them the things God wanted His children to do, and they also foretold many things that would happen in the future. All three of these prophets told of the coming of the kingdom of God, which is the church.



The kingdom of Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians.

Level 18A

Esther, the young Jewish Queen of Persia, lived during the years of the Medo-Persian Empire. Her story actually took place about halfway through the years described in this lesson.



During the first year of his reign, King Cyrus of Persia sent out a proclamation saying that the Lord God of heaven had appointed him to allow the rebuilding of the house of God in Jerusalem. Cyrus said that all Jews who wished to do so could return to Jerusalem and help with the rebuilding of the temple. He commanded that all who could not go should give freely of their gold and silver to help the work in Jerusalem.

The people of Judah had been in Babylon for seventy years. Jeremiah, the prophet, had foretold that the people would live in captivity for seventy years and then be allowed to return to Jerusalem. Now the seventy years are complete, and God used King Cyrus, a Persian, to carry out His will. Zerubbabel, grandson of King Jehoiachin and a descendant of David, was one of the leaders of the people on the first return to Jerusalem. In all forty-two thousand, three hundred sixty men and women of Judah returned to Judah with Zerubbabel. There were also seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven servants and two hundred singers on this return journey. (There is no evidence that Daniel returned to Jerusalem. He was very old and probably unable to travel by the time the Jews returned home.)

All the Jews gave freely of their gold and silver and other valuables so the temple could be rebuilt. King Cyrus returned the temple vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had

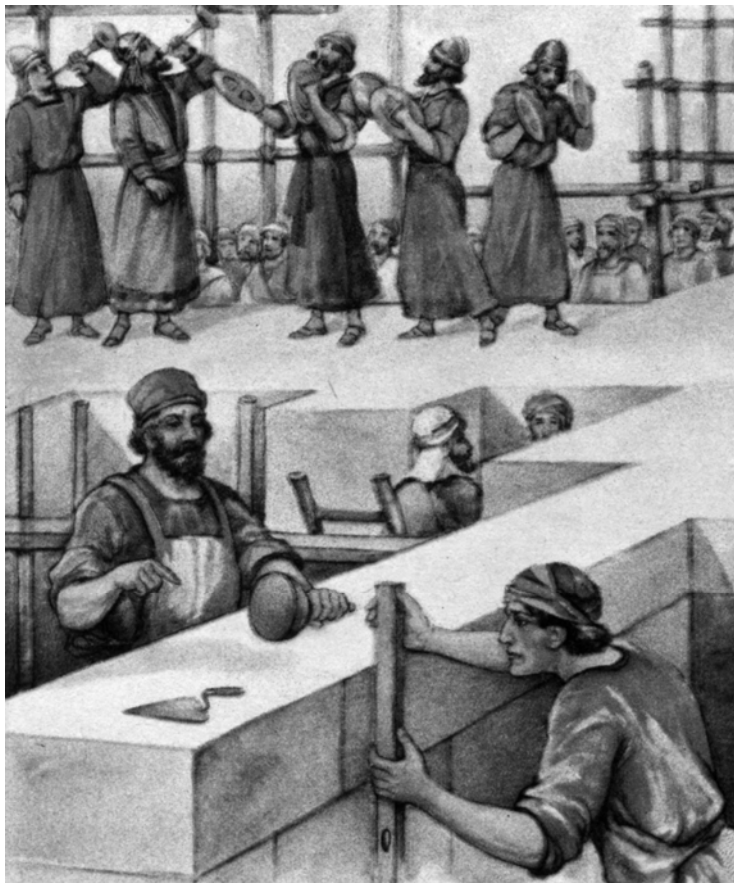
stolen from the temple in Jerusalem.

The people of Judah returned home, at least some of them did. Remember the prophets had told the people to make homes in Babylon and many people did not wish to return to Jerusalem at this time. The returning captives went to their own cities in Judah. In the seventh month all the people came together in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of booths as commanded in the law of Moses. They offered burnt offerings to God, begging for His help, because they were terrified of the people living around them.



Two years after they returned to Judah, the people started to lay the foundation of the temple of God. They received permission from Cyrus and paid men to bring cedars from Lebanon for the temple. When the foundation was complete, the priests offered prayers of thanks and praise to God. Many of the old men could remember Solomon's

great temple which had stood in Jerusalem, and they wept while the younger people shouted with joy.



The enemies of Judah tried to get Zerubbabel to allow them to help rebuild the temple, but this was not allowed. They tried to discouraged and frighten the Jews so they would stop the work. When their plan failed, the enemy wrote to the new Persian king and told him that the Jews were building a city and planning to rebel against Persia. The new king issued orders that the temple work must stop, so the work in Jerusalem stopped and was not permitted to continue until the

Level 18A

second year of King Darius. (This is a king other than the Darius whom Daniel served.)

The prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged the Jews and with their help, Zerubbabel was able to start the work on the temple again. But the enemy returned! A letter was written to King Darius in Persia concerning the work on the temple. Darius searched the old documents and found the proclamation made by Cyrus granting permission for rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. He then ordered that the work continue because a law of the Persian king could not be changed!

The temple of God in Jerusalem was completed in the sixth year of Darius. (Twenty years after it was started by Zerubbabel.) The people offered sacrifices and observed the feast days, giving thanks to God for bringing them back home to Judah.

During the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, a scribe and priest named Ezra received permission to return to Jerusalem. (This Artaxerxes was the son of Xerxes, husband of Esther.) God was with Ezra, and he received whatever he asked from the king. Artaxerxes gave Ezra a decree saying that all Jews who desired to do so could return with Ezra to Jerusalem. They had the king's permission to take the gold and silver which the king gave them and the gold and silver donated by the Jew. The decree stated that the money was to be used to buy animals and grains for sacrifices. Any money left over could be used as Ezra and the other leaders saw fit. Ezra was given authority to teach the people about God and His laws.

Ezra and the Jews who wished to leave Babylon traveled four months to reach Jerusalem. God was with them, and they had a safe journey to their homeland. They went to the temple and gave the money to the priests and offered sacrifices to God. Ezra gave the king's decree to the local governors, and they helped God's people in everything they set out to do.



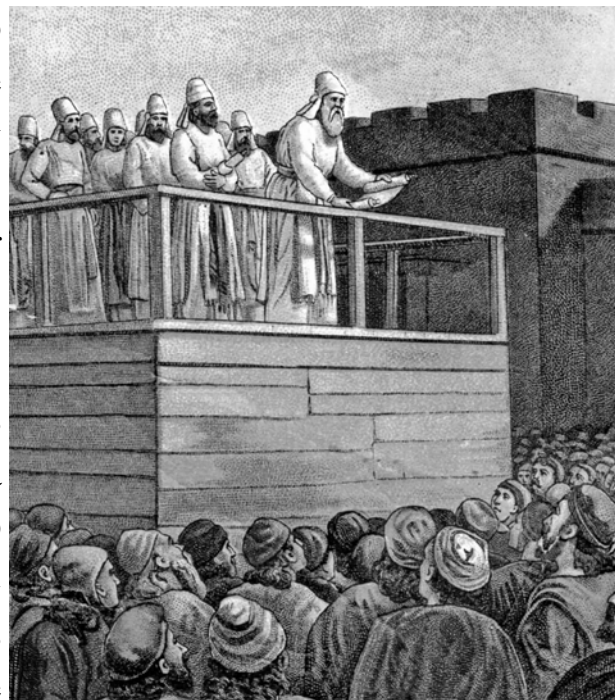
Ezra was very upset to learn that the Jews had not given up their foreign wives and children before they returned to Jerusalem. God was not pleased with those who

married foreigners. It was foreigners who turned the people away from God to serve idols. Ezra fasted and prayed, and he finally convinced the Jews to give up the foreign wives and children and turn back to God with all their heart.

In this lesson we see that God kept His promise to the people. The first group of Jews returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel, a descendant of King David. The second group was led by the Ezra, the priest and scribe.. The people of Judah underwent some changes during the seventy years of captivity. For one

thing they became known as Jews. This name comes from the fact that the people were from Judah. The Jews also adopted a new language. They now spoke Aramaic as well as Hebrew. Many of them could speak only Aramaic! The most important thing that happened was their return to God. They turned away from idol worship and served only the true and living God.

Sometimes in our lives people try to stop us from the work God appointed for us, but we must not fear them. We must go on with the work and please God.



STORY QUIZ

1. What Persian king issued a decree allowing the Jews to go home to Jerusalem?
2. What did Cyrus tell the Jews to do in Jerusalem?
3. For how many years were the Jews captive in Babylon?
4. What prince of Judah led the first returning Jews?
5. From whom was Zerubbabel descended?
6. Who wanted to help build the temple?
7. What two prophets encouraged the Jews to continue the temple work?
8. Who was Ezra?
9. For what purpose did Ezra collect gold and silver?
10. What did Ezra teach the people to do concerning their unlawful wives?

Memory Verse for Level 18

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. Isaiah 9:6-7

Memory Goal for Level 18 Books of the New Testament

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, First & Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First & Second Thessalonians, First & Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, First & Second Peter, First & Second & Third John, Jude, Revelation.

ANSWERS: 1. Cyrus 2. Build a Temple 3. 70 4. Zerubbabel
5. David 6. Samaritans 7. Haggai and Zachariah
8. A priest and scribe 9. To buy sacrifices 10. Divorce them.

NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 1-13

Nehemiah was a Jew who served as a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia. (A cupbearer was a very special person. It was his responsibility to taste all food and drinks before the king ate or drank. Because of the nature of his job, the cupbearer had a very close relationship with the king.) During the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, some men returned to Babylon from Jerusalem. Nehemiah asked about the city and the Jews who were living there. The men told Nehemiah that Jerusalem was a shameful mess. The walls were torn down, the gates burned, and the people were very poor and distressed. They told Nehemiah that the people had to borrow money to pay their taxes and everything in Jerusalem was very bad. When Nehemiah heard this he was very upset. He cried and mourned for many days. He fasted and prayed to God for the people in Judah.



When Nehemiah went before Artaxerxes to serve him, the king said, “Why is your face so sad when you are not sick? It must be your heart that is troubling you.” Nehemiah said, “Why shouldn't I be sad? The city of my fathers is in a shameful condition, and its walls and gates are torn down.” The king asked Nehemiah what he wanted to do, and Nehemiah asked for permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city. The king wanted to know when Nehemiah wished to go and how long he intended to be gone. Nehemiah asked for a letter permitting safe passage from Persia to Jerusalem. (Ancient Persia is modern day Iraq.) Nehemiah also



Level 18B

asked for and received a letter to the forest keeper which permitted him to get wood for the walls, gates, and houses of Jerusalem. The king gave Nehemiah everything he asked for because God was with him. The king even sent some soldiers as an escort for Nehemiah and those traveling with him.

Nehemiah reached Jerusalem safely, and for three days he told no one why he had come. During the third night he took a few men with him and rode a donkey around to



inspect the walls of the city. After inspecting the walls, Nehemiah told the Jews how God was with him, and he had come to rebuild the walls so the city would not be unprotected. The Jews agreed to start work on the walls, for it was a good work and needed to be done. The enemies of Judah were not pleased that Nehemiah had come to Jerusalem. They heard of the plan to rebuild the walls, and they came to mock and ridicule the Jews. Nehemiah told his people to go on with the work for God was with them. The Jews worked together. Nehemiah assigned each family a certain section of the wall to be completed. As the work progressed, the enemy became very angry and mocked

the Jews, but the Jews kept on working. Soon, the wall was joined together around the city and was to half its finished height.

The enemy decided to go to Jerusalem and fight with the Jews to stop the work.

The Jews prayed to God for help, and they set guards to keep a watch day and night. Every family was armed with swords, spears, and bows, but they were not afraid. Nehemiah told the people not to be afraid because God was very powerful, and He would fight for them. The enemies learned that the Jews knew of the planned attack, and they knew God had stopped their plans to harm His children. Nehemiah had half of his people work on the walls while the other half stood guard with swords, spears, bows, and shields. Each man wore a sword as he worked,

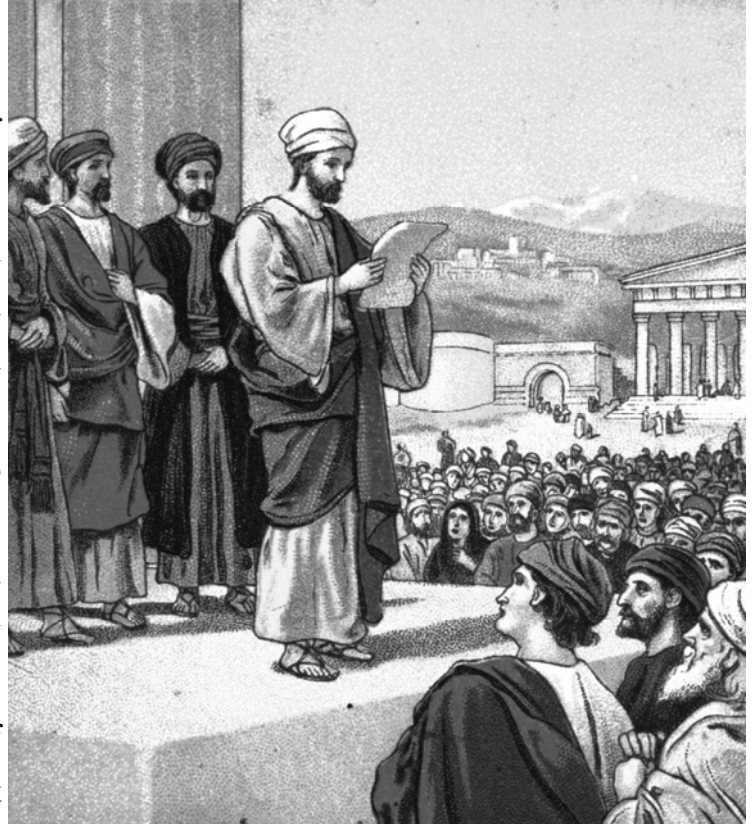


and everyone slept inside the city walls. The people didn't even take off their clothes to sleep.

The enemy tried to get Nehemiah to meet with them outside the city, but He refused to meet with them. He knew they meant to harm him, but Nehemiah refused to sin by being afraid! He knew God would help and protect the Jews. The work on the walls continued every day. In just fifty-two days the walls were completed around the

entire city! All the people gathered to rejoice. They asked Ezra to read to them from the book of the law of Moses.

Ezra read to them, and the people bowed and worshiped God. The priests explained the meaning of the laws, and the people wept. Nehemiah, Ezra, and the priests told them not to weep, for it was a holy day and they should be happy. Ezra taught the people the ways of God and they obeyed all His commandments. Nehemiah served as governor of Jerusalem for twelve years. He went back to Persia for about a year and then returned to his homeland in Judah.



It is wonderful to see how powerful and great people can be when they put their trust and faith in God. God is still powerful, and He still works in the lives of His children today.

STORY QUIZ

1. What position did Nehemiah hold in Persia?
2. What king did Nehemiah serve?
3. What did Nehemiah ask the king to let him do?
4. To what city in Judah did Nehemiah go?
5. When did Nehemiah inspect the city walls?
6. Who mocked and ridiculed the Jews as they worked?
7. How did Nehemiah divide the wall work?
8. How long did it take the Jews to build the walls?
9. Who read the book of law to the Jews in Jerusalem?
10. How long did Nehemiah serve as governor?

Memory Verse Level 18

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. Isaiah 9:6-7

Memory Goal for Level 18 Books of the New Testament

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, First & Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First & Second Thessalonians, First & Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, First & Second Peter, First & Second & Third John, Jude, Revelation.

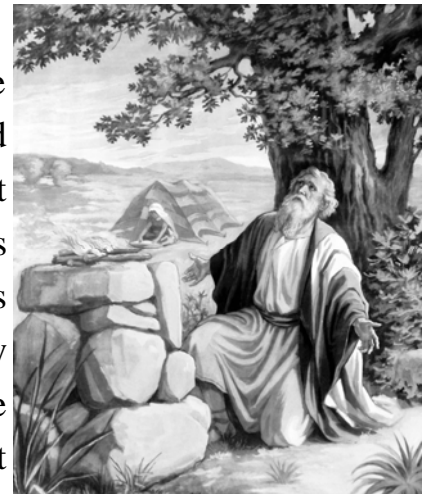
Answers: (1) Cupbearer (2) Artaxerxes (3) Return to Judah (4) Jerusalem (5) At night (6) The enemies (7) By families (8) 52 days (9) Ezra (10) Twelve years

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

From World History

We have completed our study of history of the world from the Old Testament. We learned about God's creation and the first people. We studied about the great men of the first period of Bible history. These men were called Patriarchs, which means fathers. We learned that from the very beginning of time God planned to send His only Son to earth to establish His kingdom which is the church. We followed the Bible story which tells how God carried out His plans for the kingdom.

We learned about God's promises to Abraham and the beginning of the nation of Israel. We learned how God brought His people, the Israelites, out of the land of Egypt into the promised land of Canaan. We learned about Moses and the law God gave him for the people. The Israelites entered Canaan where they were ruled first by judges then by kings. Because of the sins of King Solomon, God divided the kingdom, making the nations of Israel and Judah. God kept His promise to David by allowing David's descendants to rule over His people. Because of the sins of the people, God sent the Assyrians against Israel, and the people were taken into captivity. Because of Judah's sins, they were captured and taken into Babylon. The nation of Israel was not reestablished, but God kept His promise to David, and Judah returned to Jerusalem after seventy year in captivity.

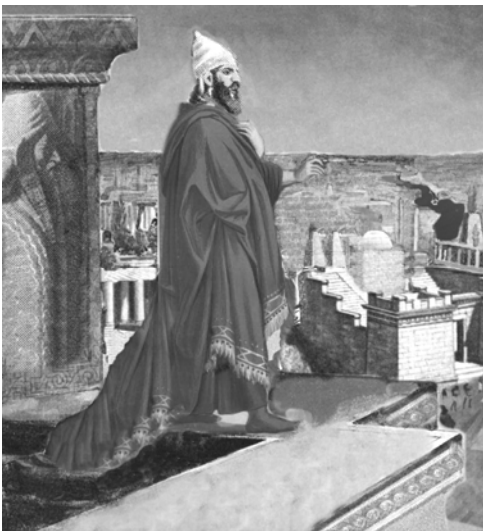


Throughout all the years of the kings, God sent prophets to preach to the people, warning them about their sins, but the people refused to listen. God sent prophets during the captivity. Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and other prophets worked for God and brought the people back to a true faith in the Most High God.

Our Bible has an Old Testament and a New Testament. The Old Testament ends with the book of Malachi, the prophet. This book was written about four

Level 18C

hundred years before Jesus was born. The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus, so there are four hundred years of history which are not recorded in our Bible. The



prophet Daniel told about four nations which would rule over the entire world before God established His kingdom. World history tells us about these four world powers.

In this lesson we will talk about some of the main events of the four hundred years between the Old and New Testaments. This will help you to better understand the Jews and their way of thinking when Jesus was born.

Daniel told about four kingdoms. The first of these was the Babylonian Empire under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar. The Medes and Persians became the next world power, and they are the ones who allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. About three hundred fifty years before Jesus was born, the Greeks, under the leadership of a young man named Alexander, came to power.

The Greeks brought their religions and their ways of life to the land they conquered. The Olympic games were begun by the Greeks as a form of entertainment. The young athletes performed their arts in the nude. Many young Jews became interested and took part in this sinful entertainment. Even the name of the “games” (Olympics) served to honor the Greek idol god, Olympus.

The bad influence of the Greeks upon the Jews caused much trouble among the Jews. Faithful Jews hated the Greek way of life, and they rebelled against the Jews who had gone over to the Greeks ways. Men set themselves up as gods, and this was against everything the Jews believed.



Wars and troubles were everywhere. Jews were fighting Jews as well as Greeks. Then, about one hundred seventy-five years after the Greeks came to power, the Jews found the book of Daniel, the prophet.



According to God's plan, the book of Daniel had been hidden, but now God allowed it to be revealed to give hope to the Jews. Daniel told about the coming of God's kingdom. God promised to send a Messiah or Savior who would help them. The book of Daniel caused much excitement among the Jews, and a family by the name of Maccabee rose up to lead the Jews in rebellion against the hated Greeks. These were sad, bloody years for the Jews, but they had new hope. A Savior was coming!

The Greeks ruled the world until about sixty-three years before Jesus was born. The Romans then became the fourth world power. This was the kingdom of iron. Thousands of Jews were killed when the Romans took Jerusalem, but the Romans allowed the Jews to worship as they pleased and to have their own government. A "king" of the Jews was allowed to rule as long as the Jewish laws did not conflict with the Roman laws. This made a weak power, a divided kingdom. This is the feet of iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Herod became the Jewish king in 40 B.C., and this family was ruling in Jerusalem when Jesus Christ was born. The Jews were taxed by the Romans and by the temple. The Gentiles (ungodly foreigners) lived among the Jews, and faithful Jews looked to God for help. God had helped them before, and He had promised to send a Messiah or Savior. Surely He would save them again.



Level 18C

Many changes had taken place in the Jewish religion. The temple was still the main place of worship, but small places of worship called synagogues were built in many towns and cities. Over the years the priests had added their own laws to God's laws, and this caused a major division in the Jewish religion. A group called the Pharisees was the most powerful of Jews. They were the ones who added laws making it almost impossible for the people to obey. They believed in the resurrection of the dead and in heavenly beings (angels). Another group of Jews, called the Sadducees, did not believe in the added laws nor did they believe in the resurrection and angels. Jesus condemned both of these groups, because they worshiped with their mouths and not with their hearts. (A little trick to help you keep these two groups straight The Sadducees were *Sad You See* because they did not believe in the resurrection.)



All Jews looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. They knew God had promised to send a deliverer, and they were anxious for His coming. They wanted to see God's Messiah overthrow the Roman rulers and set up a new kingdom like that of David.

God did send the Deliverer. He sent His only Son, but Jesus was not the kind of king the Jews wanted or expected. Jesus came to set up the kingdom of God, but the Jews wanted a king like David, a king who would lead them to war against their enemies. But Jesus said, "Love your enemies!" He was not what they looked forward to. He was not what they wanted, so they crucified the only Son of God!

As you continue your Bible study into the New Testament, you will learn about the birth of Jesus, his life on earth, and the birth of His kingdom, the church. God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Suggested Reading For Teachers

The following books have been of great help to me in my study of the Old Testament. I urge all teachers to read and study these and other helpful books to better prepare for teaching God's Word.

The Genesis Record, by Henry M. Morris, published by Baker Book House.

The Bible And Archaeology, by J.A. Thompson, published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Commentary And Critical Notes, by Adam Clark, published by Abingdon Press.

Exploring The Old Testament, W.T. Purkiser, Editor. Published by Beacon Hill Press.

The Narrated Bible, by F. LaGard Smith, published by Harvest House Publishers.

The Chronology Of The Bible, by Frank R. Klassen, published by Regal Publishers.

Great People Of The Bible And How They Lived, published by Reader's Digest

The artwork used in my original Story Book was the work of a faithful sister in Christ, Carolyn Benson. Regretfully, I lost contact with Carolyn more than 20 years ago so was not able to use her pictures in this edition. Carolyn left us to be with the Lord in February 2010. It saddens me that I didn't make a more diligent effort to renew our acquaintance.

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