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WORSHIPPING OUR CHRIST IN ALL THE BOOKS OF HISTORY

- I. **THE BOOKS OF HISTORY ARE FOUNDATIONAL TO THE BIBLE**
May I impress upon your heart that the book you hold in your hands is unlike any other in the Universe? And with that truth deeply upon our hearts, in the days ahead, shouldn't we treat it differently, read it diligently, wait before it expectantly and from it learn to live triumphantly? There are three reasons why I believe the Bible is truly like no other book anywhere: Because The Bible is Unique; Because The Bible is Powerful; Because The Bible is Divine. Tonight we are going to examine these three components of the Bible's Character, that make the Bible so precious.
 - A. **THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE** There is no other book like the Bible: The Bible contains.. 3,566,480 letters; 810,697 words; 31,175 verses; 1,189 chapters and 66 books. It is, therefore, a "divine library," and demands not only spiritual illumination, but also the practical application of reverent and diligent study methods in order to master its diversified subjects, as well as its unified message. There was no other book written like the Bible.
 - B. **THE BIBLE IS POWERFUL** in seven wonderful ways, because it is a:
 1. **REVEALER** -- It discovers and convicts us of sin in our lives [John 16:7-10](#) Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; (KJV)
 2. **REMOVER** -- Through it God's Spirit cleanses us from sin [John 17:17](#) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. [Hebrews 9:14](#) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience

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from dead works to serve the living God?

[Hebrews 10:22](#) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (KJV)

3. **RESTORER** -- It imparts strength to our spiritual man [Jeremiah 15:16](#) Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts. (KJV)
4. **REMINDER** -- It instructs us in going God's way [Romans 15:4](#) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (KJV)
5. **RESISTOR** -- It provides us a sword for victory over sin and temptations [Ephesians 6:17](#) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (KJV)
6. **REFINER**-- It shapes us into a life that glorifies Him [1 Peter 1:7](#) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (KJV)
7. **REVIVER** -- It drives us to prayerful dependence [Psalm 119:25](#) My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. (KJV) [John 15:7-8](#) If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (KJV)

C. **THE BIBLE IS DIVINE** There are many Books in the Bible that reveal truths about our beautiful Lord Jesus. But there is only one that has as its theme and central purpose to unveil and reveal JESUS CHRIST THE LORD. Note [Revelation 19:10](#), [John 5:39](#) and [Luke 24:27](#).

II. THE SCRIPTURES ARE CHRIST CENTERED

We have found the Scriptures are Unique, Powerful, and Divine. Now we want to see how Centered the Scriptures are upon Christ. Then we can see the content of the Scriptures.

A. JESUS SHINES FROM EVERY BOOK OF THE BIBLE.

Each reveals some truths about our beautiful Lord Jesus. And, there is one that has as its theme and central purpose to unveil and reveal JESUS CHRIST THE LORD. To see the central theme of Christ in all the Scriptures look at these verses: [Revelation 19:10](#), [John 5:39](#) and [Luke 24:27](#).

B. CHRIST IS SEEN IN THE BOOKS OF HISTORY:

1. In **GENESIS** He is Creating the Universe. The Scriptures are the only reliable source of information on the origin and purpose of: universe, man, sin, nations, covenant and curse. Key Word = **GENERATIONS** [used 10x in book as outline].
2. In **EXODUS** He is Delivering His People. He is the Way out: of Egypt, of sin, of Earth. Key Word = **DELIVERANCE**.
3. In **LEVITICUS** He opens the Approach to a Holy God, Who is present with His people[1:3 before the Lord 60x in book]; Who demands holiness in His people [11:44; 19:2; 20:7]. Key Word = **HOLINESS** occurs 93x in the book.
4. In **NUMBERS** He is the Faithful One Dealing with His Unfaithful People. Key Word = **CHASTENING**
5. In **DEUTERONOMY** He is Seeking Loyalty from His chosen people as their **PROMISE KEEPER**. Key Word = **COVENANT** which occurs 27x.
6. In **JOSHUA** He is Commander of the Lord's

Army, Leading His People in Conquest. Key Idea = OBEDIENCE.

7. In JUDGES He is Chastening His wayward people who follow seven specific sin-salvation cycles though this book. Key Idea = DISOBEDIENCE
8. In RUTH He is Kinsman to His needy people. Key Word = LOYALTY
9. In 1 SAMUEL - 11 CHRONICLES He is the Perfect King. IN Samuel God Seeks for a Man; In Kings God Sees All; in Chronicles God Saves, Preserves, Rewards His Own. Key Words = EYES OF THE LORD used 13x.
10. In EZRA He is our Peg in the Holy Place. Key Word = RETURNING
11. In NEHEMIAH He is our Sure Foundation. Key Word = RESTORING.
12. In ESTHER He is our Unseen Defender. Key Word = PROTECTING.

III. **THE SCRIPTURES ARE VERY SYMMETRICAL.** It starts with 17 books of history. Five Major books (Gen-Deut) then 12 historic books (9 pre-exilic and 3 post-exilic). Then 5 books of poetry. These are in the middle of the Old Testament and deal with the heart of Jewish worship (Pain, Worship, Living, Life and Love). Then 17 books of prophecy. Five are major (Isaiah to Daniel) and 12 are Minor (of these 9 are pre-exilic and 3 are post-exilic). Thus the Pentateuch is the designation for those first five Old Testament books of history. Moses was the author of all of these crucial books. We are sure of that because Jesus said so in His ministry here on earth. The five books lay a foundation for the rest of the Word of God. Note with me the unifying theme each book is built around: Genesis "Calling into Being"; Exodus "Calling out of Bondage"; Leviticus "Calling unto Consecration"; Numbers "Calling from Confusion"; Deuteronomy "Calling back to the Covenant".

GENESIS "CHRIST CALLING THE UNIVERSE INTO BEING" The Book of Genesis [Greek for 'origin, source or beginning'] starts with the Hebrew word *bereshith* which means 'in the head of all things'. This speaks of the absolute beginning, before which is nothing as we know it -- but God in Three Persons. This book introduces in the first eleven chapters, most of the major doctrines of Christianity. These are, the Doctrines of: God, creation, man, sin and the coming redeemer, divine love, judgment, consequences of sin, fellowship with the Creator God, worship and the family. These ten areas are enlarged upon throughout the Scriptures. The book of Genesis covers more time than all the rest of the Bible. Genesis starts at Creation [at least 4000 BC] and continues to the death of Joseph [1915-1805BC], which is about 2,195 years. The rest of the Bible is covering about 1,900 years, from 1805BC to AD 95. The entire book revolves around Four Great Events and Four Great People. The EVENTS are: The Creation [1-2], The Fall [3-5], The Flood [6-8] and the Tower at Babel [10-11:9]. The PEOPLE are: Abraham [11:10-25:18] whose life is one of faith and failure, covenant and promise. Isaac [25:19-26:35] who is a link for the covenant. Jacob [27:1-36:43] a man God transforms and who fathers the Twelve Tribes. Joseph [37-50] who is a tool in God's hand.

I. **GENESIS YIELDS GREAT LESSONS TO LIVE BY.** To close look at just two events and the practical application of both.

A. **THE FACTS OF THE FALL**

1. The Search by God of the fallen: God wants Voluntary Worship
2. Availability of God before the Fall: God wants Personal Fellowship
3. The Promise of God: God wants to Save us

B. **THE LESSONS OF THE FALL**

1. Eve's Choice: Our vulnerability to Temptation
2. Adam and Eve's Fall: Our susceptibility to do our own thing, thus self-rule.
3. Adam and Eve's Response: Our inability to accept responsibility, blame shifting.

C. **THE FACTS OF THE FLOOD**

1. The Heart of God: He Grieves for Fallen Man
 2. The Wrath of God: He Destroys by Holy Judgment
 3. The Love of God: He Saves by Sovereign Choice
 4. The Truth of God: He Reminds by Divine Revelation
- D. **THE LESSONS OF THE FLOOD**
1. The Sin of Mankind: Reminds us we are sinners
 2. Deafness to the Message: Warns us to Listen
 3. Response of Noah: Challenges our Availability
 4. Second Chance for Mankind: Offers Hope for All
- E. **THE LESSONS OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS:**
1. God is HOLY, He will judge sin. [Gal. 6:7](#)
 2. God is LOVING, He will seek out individuals. [Luke 19:10](#)
 3. God is GRACIOUS, He will transform fallen sinners First [Peter 5:5](#)

EXODUS "CHRIST CALLING HIS OWN OUT OF BONDAGE" Tonight join me in the Dark splendors of ancient Egypt. Stand with me amid Moses and Egyptian Plagues. Before him stretched the wonders of the Nile. The forest of 50 to 70 foot red granite and limestone pillars ornately carved and painted with cartooshes and hieroglyphics was impressive. To stand before the living god-Pharaoh himself was threatening. To be eighty years old [as Moses was] and to face the most powerful King of the Ancient Near East World of that time would be overwhelming! But God wanted to give His people a special message. He wanted them to know the way out. We need the same truths today.

- I. **EXODUS HAS A THREE PART MESSAGE ABOUT - THE WAY OUT...** He showed them how to get out of Bondage, Ignorance and Earthliness. We can follow the same paths!
- A. **THE WAY OUT... OF BONDAGE [1-12] INTO FREEDOM, SHOWS GOD IS POWERFUL**
1. A Prepared Servant [1-6]
 2. A Powerful Display [7-11] = Plagues
 3. A Permanent Reminder [12] = Passover
- B. **THE WAY OUT... OF IGNORANCE [13-24] INTO GOD'S LAW AND PROGRAM, THIS SHOWS GOD IS HOLY**
1. God Protected Them [13-15] = Red Sea
 2. God Provided for Them [16-18] = food & water
 3. God Prepared Them [19-20]
- C. **THE WAY OUT... OF EARTHLINESS [25-40], INTO GOD'S PRESENCE, THIS SHOWS GOD IS FRIENDLY**
1. **THE TABERNACLE POINTS TO GOD:**
 - a) Articles Point to Christ:
 - b) Brazen Altar = total devotion Christ
 - c) Laver = Christ the Eternal Cleanser
 - d) Lamp Stand = Christ the light of the world
 - e) Show Bread = Christ the Bread of Life
 - f) Altar of Incense = Christ constant Intercessor and Priest
 - g) Holy of Holies
 2. **THE COLORS SPEAK OF CHRIST:**
 - a) White = perfection, parallel to Luke, Christ the Perfect Man .
 - b) Blue = Heaven, parallel to John's Gospel of the Deity of Christ.
 - c) Scarlet = sacrifice, parallel to Mark's Gospel as Christ the Perfect Servant.
 - d) Purple = Royalty, parallel to Matthew's Gospel of Christ the perfect King.
- II. **MOSES AND THE FINGER OF GOD (EXODUS 7-11).**
Ancient Egypt at its Zenith fifteen centuries before Christ was awesome. The Pyramids were over a thousand years old, and stood towering ominously over this proud and powerful people. The 'God-Kings' or Pharaohs as we call them, were sons of Khnum, descendants of RA and the bearers of divinity to the masses. Astride the Mighty Nile, Egypt knew prosperity, fertile and productive agriculture and great peace. But, a nation had grown up in their midst for 400 years. It had started with just an old man and his twelve boys. Jacob and his twelve sons, his daughters and their families had flourished. In Goshen they now

numbered nearly three million. As God had promised to his grandfather Abraham, his descendants would be as numberless as the sands of the sea. From one man to three million is a vast multiplication. And so, the stage is set: THE GREATEST ANCIENT EMPIRE: EGYPT vs. THE ENSLAVED PEOPLE OF GOD: ISRAEL In lightning fast flashes, we have a succession of TEN POWERFUL imprints upon the fabric of Egyptian Society. A land of mystery and false worship of false gods -- brought face to face with the TRUE God of the UNIVERSE. Turn to [Exodus 6: 1-7](#); 7:3

- A. NILE PLAGUE [7:14-25] This plague was an unmistakable message. It was to drive a wooden stake into the very heart of the worship of Egypt. Simply stated, God is powerful and you are impotent.
- B. FROG PLAGUE [8:1-15] All this was a death blow to the closed system of their worship. God was true and powerful, their gods were not. HEQT was hit to show who really created Egypt. God is very concerned that all know the CREATOR.
- C. GNAT/LICE PLAGUE [8:16-19] GOD alone is holy. No priests are or could make anyone holy!
- D. FLY PLAGUE [8:20-32] Only GOD can protect from pestilence.
- E. CATTLE PLAGUE [9:1-7] MNEVIS was hit to show that even the union of the sun god and the sacred APIS bull was powerless to keep the sacred bull on display at the Heliopolis alive! This plague was devastating to Pharaoh who had vast herds of cattle [[Gen. 47:6](#), 17] The economy was so dependent on oxen for plowing and carts, cattle for milk and worship. Camels, donkeys and horses for transportation.
- F. BOIL PLAGUE [9:8-17] SEKHMET was hit to prove he could not regulate epidemics and diseases. The magicians of Pharaoh's court, Jannes and Jambres, found that when they withstood Moses his god was REAL! SERAPSIS was hit to demonstrate that only GOD is the One who is the god of healing.
- G. HAIL PLAGUE [9:18-35] ISIS and SETH were not really responsible for the crops, they were as all else, under the TRUE GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH!
- H. LOCUST PLAGUE [10:1-20] GOD alone can marshals his creatures to do His bidding.
- I. DARKNESS PLAGUE [10:21-29] GOD, who is light, struck the heart of all Egyptian religion, the worship of the sun god, RA. GOD alone gives the true light to guide individuals to the way, truth and life.
- J. DEATH OF FIRSTBORN PLAGUE [11:1-12:32] What is it about the Passover we must remember? Two main areas are presented in the Bible, God's Word.

III. THERE WAS A FINAL, DARK PLAGUE TO FEAR:

- A. **AN UNSPEAKABLE PLAGUE** - to even imagine a supernatural messenger of doom was to hunt and kill the first born, was beyond words. That anyone could pick out the first born of man and livestock in the unlit blackness of an Egyptian night, is imperceivable. And to know it was tonight, was beyond words to express.
- B. **AN UNAVOIDABLE PLAGUE** - there was no place he would not visit. Each family would be noticed and examined from poorest to the richest. From the huts of farming peasants to the ivory halls of palaces, all would see the dark shadow of the Death Angel.
- C. **AN UNSTOPPABLE PLAGUE** - there was no power on earth then or now that could have stopped that stalking death. Nothing to deflect his sword of death.
- D. **AN UNEXPECTED PLAGUE** - life was moving along as expected. Business as usual. Yes, that old fanatic was still crying judgment. But, we live in a real world, not some God we can't see who can judge us. Remember, the god's of Egypt were put to bed each night in their temples by the priest. Awakened each day, fed, clothed and put on display...
- E. Sounds just like Hell and the wrath of God facing unrepentant sinners today. Remember that Jesus says!

IV. THERE WAS A FULL SALVATION TO SEEK:

- A. **GOD'S OFFER WAS SALVATION** - He gave the ones who would listen the only solution to avert the disaster of the Death Angel's sword.
- B. **GOD'S PLAN WAS SUBSTITUTION** - He detailed a simple act of taking an innocent, spotless lamb to die in the place of the family members.
- C. **GOD'S METHOD WAS THE SPRINKLING OF BLOOD** - in the dark, a sprinkle of blood on the door posts was all it took to find protection.
- D. **GOD'S PROMISE WAS SUFFICIENT** - it included deliverance from death, provision of all needs for life, and the hope of a land of promise flowing with milk and honey. All this with a personal guide to assure safe arrival!

LEVITICUS: "Christ Calling His own to Consecration" The book of Leviticus has been rightly called 'the most NT of all the OT books. It reveals in an incredible way the work of Christ on the Cross. Divine Inspiration is more clearly stated in Leviticus than in any other book. Twenty chapters start with 'and the Lord said...' as well as other places totals 38 times the 'Lord spoke...'. The dual theme of ATONEMENT [48x] kaphar in Hebrew and HOLINESS [100x] qodesh, qadesh, qadosh in Hebrew, set the stage for this incomparable book. The atonement of the OT sacrifices was a kaphar "covering", they were not removing sin [Hebrews. 10:4]. Only the Coming One could offer a perfect sacrifice for sin [Hebrews. 9:15]. The holiness of Leviticus is basically "separateness". When SEPARATENESS is referring to God it implies that He is unique and separate from all that is earthly and wrong. A simple definition [1] of holy comes from looking at why certain things are called holy. The Bible is called 'HOLY BIBLE', the land of Israel is called the 'HOLY LAND' and the city of Jerusalem is called the 'HOLY CITY'. Why? There is a quality about all three which they share in common. THEY ALL BELONG TO GOD. The Bible is God's book; Israel is God's land; Jerusalem is God's city- they are God's property! That is why they are HOLY; they belong to God! When referring to man kaphar speaks of a life of purity and obedience. As a sacrifice was made, there were three distinct aspects that had to be accomplished:

1. **IDENTIFICATION**: the offerer pressed his hands on the sacrifice to identify himself with it. This is parallel to personal faith in the substitutionary death of Christ. Baptism is a picture of a believer's identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. [Rom. 6:3-11]
2. **SUBSTITUTION**: the innocent animal bore the sins of another, a picture of the perfect Lamb, Christ Jesus. [Rom. 5:8; II Cor 5:21; I Pet 2:24, 3:18].
3. **PROPITIATION**: the blood was a visible evidence that a life had been offered. It is only the blood of Jesus that can satisfy the righteous wrath of a Holy God. [Lev. 17:11; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:22].

Because we are a Kingdom of Priests **1 Peter 2:9** But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (NKJV) in the NT Church where Christ is our High Priest [Hebrews 8:1; Revelation 1:6] we are to be offering to God:

1. **OUR LIFE AS A SACRIFICE** [Romans. 12:1; 15:16]
2. **OUR DEVOTION AS A BURNT OFFERING** [Mark 12:33]
3. **OUR SERVICE POURED OUT AS A DRINK OFFERING** [II Tim. 4:6; Phil. 2:7]
4. **OUR DEEDS AS CONTINUAL SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES** [I Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:16]
5. **OUR PRAYERS AS A SWEET SMELLING INCENSE OFFERING** [Revelation 8:3-4; Psalm 141:2]
6. **OUR WORSHIP AS A HEAVEN SENT PRAISE OFFERING** [Hebrews 13:15]

NUMBERS: "Christ Calling His own from Confusion" This Book speaks of the SEVERITY of GOD [He destroys the old generation in chapters 1-25] and the GOODNESS of GOD [He works with the new generation in chapters 26-36] as described in **Romans 11:22**: *Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou*

continue in [his] goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. (KJV). It also warns of two sins: PRESUMPTION [1 Corinthians 10:1-12] and UNBELIEF [Hebrews 3:7 - 4:6]. This book illustrates that unbelief defeats the unbeliever. It is an epic on the halting progress of unwilling followers. It took them only 40 hours to get out of Egypt in Exodus, 30 days to learn of God's HOLINESS in Leviticus, but nearly 40 years to get out of the Wilderness of Egypt -- within them. They went up a mixed multitude [Exodus 12:38] who wanted a Savior [Exodus] but not a Lord [Sinai].

- I. **GIVING TO GOD IN CHAPTER 7 = FREEWILL OFFERINGS**
 - A. God loves SPONTANEITY, these gifts were not commanded.
 - B. God is pleased even with UNIFORMITY, these gifts were all the same.
 - C. God expresses His delight with PARTICULARITY [God who possesses all things, loves and cherishes each individual's gift . *And he called [unto him] his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: (Mark 12:43 KJV) Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, [this] also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (Mark 14:9 KJV)*
- II. **FOLLOWING GOD IN CHAPTER 9 = THE PILLAR AND CLOUD.** This which most likely overshadowed the Camp as a shield from the desert Sun in the day and a light for the people by night, speaks of the UNFAILING GUIDANCE OF GOD. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. (Psalm 32:8 KJV) Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12 KJV)*
 - A. **THE LORD'S WORK IS PERFECT, SO REST IN IT!**
 - B. **THE LORD'S WORD IS PERFECT, SO LIVE BY IT!**
 - C. **THE LORD'S WILL IS PERFECT, SO WALK IN IT!**

DEUTERONOMY: "Christ Calling His own to the Covenant"

When Jesus was face to face with the Devil in the Wilderness of Temptation, what weapon did He choose to use against this old foe? The Scriptures, yes, but specifically where? DEUTERONOMY! All three of Satan's attacks were met by the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Remember that moment in Matthew 4? Thus, Deuteronomy is a book about Dedication to God. Key Word: Covenant occurs 27x in this book. As we study this word, we find four components of God's Plan revealed by His Covenant: *His Character, His Expectations, His Blessings and His Warnings.* Lets examine these briefly.

- I. **HIS CHARACTER: GOD IS UNIQUE** Deuteronomy 4:35 Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he [is] God; [there is] none else beside him. (KJV)
- II. **HIS EXPECTATIONS: TOTAL OBEDIENCE** Deuteronomy 11:27-28 "the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; 28 "and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. (NKJV)
- III. **HIS BLESSINGS: VICTORIOUS LIVES** Deuteronomy 7:22 And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee (KJV)

The book of Deuteronomy may best be seen as three sermons by Moses. Look Back, God has been Faithful; Look Around, God is watching; Look Ahead, God is Leading! Lets do just those three things. Through the words of Moses, inspired by God, look and learn what Israel failed to see.

- I. **LOOK BACK, GOD HAS BEEN FAITHFUL!** Deuteronomy 1-4
- II. **LOOK AROUND, GOD IS WATCHING!** Deuteronomy 5:1-26:19. In these chapters there are three categories of the Law explained.
 - A. God has Moral Expectations [5-11]. These are His "Testimonies".
 - B. God has Ceremonial Expectations [12:1-16:17] These are His "Statutes".
 - C. God has Societal Expectations [16:18-20:20]. These are His "Ordinances".

JOSHUA: Joshua stands at the gateway to the Land of Promise. Where Moses [the Law] could never go, Joshua [a type of Christ] enters and conquers. In Hebrews 11 a forty year gap between the Red Sea and the Jordan marks this period of no faith leading up to the faithful Leader Joshua was. The book of Joshua divides into two halves. The first fourteen chapters describe the conquest of Canaan, about 1406-1400 B.C., whereas 15-24 relate the division of the land among the tribes. Contrary to Numbers [God chastening His disobedient people], which precedes it, and Judges [God judging His wayward people], which follows it, Joshua emphasizes God [YAHWEH] blessing His people when they obey Him. God fulfills His promises by bringing His people to the land. They are to conquer and settle this land. As long as they obey He will fight for them. If they disobey they must serve the nations around them. Thus the Book of Joshua portrays the unchanging truths that lead us to Victory. There is TRIUMPH for those who:

- I. **WALK BY THE WORD** [Joshua 1-5] [Joshua 1:8](#) "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (NKJV)
- II. **WIN BY FAITH** [Joshua 6-22] [Joshua 10:8](#) And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you." (NKJV)
- III. **WAIT FOR GOD** [Joshua 23-24] [Joshua 24:14-15](#) Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! 15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (NKJV)

JUDGES: The Deadly Danger of Compromise! The Book of Judges stands as the seventh book of the Scriptures. The message of this book sobers our hearts. All of us have the potential to fail as grievously as they failed. Sin is an ever present enemy to be hated and avoided at all costs. Compromising the Word of God or the walk of faith brings disastrous results. God commands us to steer clear of all worldly entanglements and pursue Him. In the book of Judges we meet 12 judges, view 7 tragic cycles where Israel sinned, served, supplicated and were saved and 2 appendices portraying the deadly danger of compromise. As we turn to Judges, we enter a book covering four hundred years of biblical history. Several other important periods span 400 years in the Scriptures. Remember these Four Hundred years segments?

- From Abraham's birth to Joseph's death is 400 years.
 - From Joseph's death to the Exodus is 400 years.
 - From the Exodus to King Saul is 400 years.
 - From King Saul to the Exile is 400 years.
 - From the prophet Malachi to John the Baptist is 400 years.
- I. **WALKING IN OBEDIENT FAITH REAPS DELIGHTS** [1:1-18] A life of blessing, victory and conquest is offered by God and taken by them.
 - II. **FORSAKING GODLY OBEDIENCE REAPS DISASTERS** [1:19-16:31] A life of defeats, bondage, servitude and captivity. We may ask how and why did they forsake godly obedience? What may we learn from their steps down?
 - A. They TOLERATED the enemies of God and did not drive them out! [1:19, 21, 27] They left remnants of the Canaanites lodged among them. Slowly the influence of sin pervaded their lives. That would be like Christians today holding on to cigarettes, alcohol, rock music and pornography.
 - B. They CYCLED downward in disobedience away from

the Lord. Starting in 2:11 they sinned, in 2:14 God sold them to oppressors and they served, in 2:15 they cried to or supplicated the Lord and 2:16 He saved or delivered them. This pattern goes on for six more times. Each servitude is more fierce and harsh upon them.

- C. They NEGLECTED pursuing the knowledge of God. [2:10] That would be a lack of prayer, Scripture reading and study, memorization and ministry. Do you read, pray, study, memorize and serve the Lord?
- D. They MINGLED by intermarrying with the pagans [3:6]. They shared life with those who denied their Master and learned their evil ways. This would show up in our lives as modern dancing, bars, wild parties, exposure to indecent movies, compromising dating relationships, immodest clothing and a basic hunger for holy living.
- E. They ABANDONED the exclusiveness of God by following other gods. [3:7]. This direction taken by Israel is known as syncretism, the blending together of various religions. The idols of the pagans were actually demons doing Satans bidding.
- F. They HARDENED is what their consciences became. They had lived so long with defiled minds sin no longer pained them [17:6]. We see this in the growing insensitivity to sin all around us and even in the church.
- G. They DEPARTED from their true King and Ruler, the Lord! [21:25]. Defeat always lies before those who do what is right in their own eyes.

III. **REMAINING IN DISOBEDIENCE REAPS DESTRUCTION**
[17-21] Continuing in ungodliness results in a life of destruction, declension, defilement, darkness and despair. There are two horrible illustrations of this in the closing chapters.

RUTH: In the beautiful little book of Ruth we meet "*The Woman who would not turn back*"! The book of Ruth opens during the period of the Judges when apostasy, decadence, violence, anarchy and warfare were the norm. Famine strikes Bethlehem which means a house of bread. In this time of need, Elimelech which means my God is King, seems to depart from the plan and desires of God. He takes Naomi which means pleasantness and favor, away from the land of promise and the covenant people of God into the land of Israel's enemies, Moab. With them go their two sons Mahlon which means joy or song, and Chilion which means ornament or perfection. These men seem to have stepped out of the revealed will of God in His Word, by marrying pagan, gentile women of God's enemies.

Away from the land of promise in Moab [descendants of Lot who worshiped Chemosh a god of human sacrifice by burning], Elimelech [my God is King] dies and so does Mahlon [joyful song] and Chilion [ornament of perfection]. After ten years of hardship Naomi [pleasant sweetness] becomes Mara [bitterness]. With all those she ever loved buried beneath the sod of Moab [her husband and two sons]. She finally looks back at the land of promise because food is available in Bethlehem. As she sets off to return home she asks her daughter-in-laws to go back to their families and find a new life. In one of the most touching moments of the Scriptures, Ruth [satisfied, fullness] clings to Naomi and the God of Israel. Orpah [stiff necked, double minded] departs for her people in Moab.

The two main sources of extra biblical history on this period are the widely respected references *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and the *Jewish Encyclopedia* both record the historical note that Orpah and Ruth were descendants of Eglon King of Moab. When Orpah left Naomi forsook the God of Israel, embraced the gods of Moab, married and bore a child and from her descendants came Harafu the mother of the four Philistine giants, one who was named Goliath. It is fascinating to think that David, Ruth's grandson met and destroyed Goliath, Orpah's grandson. The result of a simple turn in the path of life. What a great difference small decisions make.

I. **EVEN IN THE SMALLEST TEXTS WE FIND ARE FULL OF GOD!**

II. EVEN IN THE DARKEST TIMES WE CAN SHINE FOR GOD!

III. EVEN THE REMOTEST PLACES YEILD FRUIT FOR GOD!

- A. We can find hidden blessings in otherwise boring genealogies: Noah was the 10th generation and we see in him a God who saves by grace [Gen. 6:8]. Abraham the 20th generation and we see in him a God who calls by election [Gen. 12:1]. Boaz the 30th generation and we see a God who offers hope [Ruth] What does this mean? Love that doesn't falter or change is the message of Ruth. Hope for Jews and Gentiles may be found in the love of a God who takes in a gentile Ruth.
- B. We can find powerful challenges for dedicated Christian:
 - 1. Following the Lord takes definite choices. [Ruth clings to Naomi]
 - 2. Following the Lord often means we must leave behind things that were once dear. [Ruth leaves behind her old family]
 - 3. Following the Lord demands constant discipline. [Ruth could see her old home in the hills of Moab every day in the fields of Bethlehem]
 - 4. Following the Lord offers incredible rewards. [Ruth is invited into the family of Boaz, the line of David, the lineage of the Messiah Jesus Christ]

I SAMUEL: Life in the flesh or Spirit would be an apt title of this first book of Samuel. The striking contrasts between Hannah and Peniah, Samuel and Eli, David and Saul attest to this truth. We read some of the great stories of the Bible in First Samuel, like the persistent love of Hannah [1], the wicked sons of Eli [2], the calling of Samuel [3], the humiliation of Dagon [4-6], the disobedience of Saul [13-end], David's calling from the flocks [16], David and Goliath [17], the friendship of Jonathan [18], Saul and the witch [28] and so many more. This book also marvelously introduces to three key doctrines: the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Prayer and the Doctrine of Worship. We can briefly examine each.

I. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD IS FULL OF RICHES TO GROW BY.

II. THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER IS FULL OF WISDOM TO PRAY BY.

- A. **GOD GIVES OUR HEARTS DESIRE THROUGH PRAYER.** Hannah prays for a son and is given Samuel [1:10, 12, 26, 27; 2:1].
- B. **GOD GIVES US VICTORY THROUGH PRAYER.** Samuel prays for Israel and they are led to victory by God [7:5-10].
- C. **GOD GIVES US COMFORT THROUGH PRAYER.** Samuel comes in sorrow to God for Israel that has rejected Him as their King [8:5-6].
- D. **GOD GIVES INSIGHT THROUGH PRAYER.** God reveals secrets to Samuel while he is praying [9:15].
- E. **GOD GIVES US ACCESS THROUGH PRAYER.** Samuel declares that a lack of prayer is sin [12:19, 23].
- F. **GOD GIVES NO EAR TO A REBEL.** Saul finds his rebellion and rejection of God means God will not listen to him [28:6].

III. THE DOCTRINE OF WORSHIP CENTERS ON THE PSALMS OUT OF THE HARD TIMES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID.

II SAMUEL: The book of Second Samuel records the rise, fall and finish of a great man of God. We can learn so much from him as we look into the Scriptures.

I. DAVID SERVING: : THE MAN AFTER GODS OWN HEART (II Samuel 1-10)

- A. Honors God's Servants [1:14]
- B. Expresses God's Forgiving Love [1:17-27]
- C. Keeps in touch with God [2:1]
- D. Portrays Genuine Grief [3:33-39]
- E. Gives God the Glory [5:12]
- F. Prays to God [7:18-29]

II. DAVID SINNING: : THE GIANT THAT KILLED DAVID (II Samuel 11-12)

- III. **DAVID SURVIVING: : FACING PERSONAL DISASTERS GOD'S WAY** (II Samuel 13-17). David portrays a life entrusted to God's care. He gives each care to the Lord. Watch him as he:
- IV. **DAVID SINGING: DAVID'S LAST SONG** (II Samuel 23)
- V. **DAVID SPEAKING: LESSONS FROM THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART:**
 - A. **GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF PROSPERITY AND PROTECTION.** [1 Chronicles 29:12](#) Both riches and honor *come* from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand *is* power and might; In Your hand *it is* to make great And to give strength to all. (NKJV)
 - B. **GOD WARNS NO ONE IS BEYOND THE REACH OF TEMPTATION.** [1 Corinthians 10:12-13](#) Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*. (NKJV)
 - C. **GOD KNOWS FAMILY LIFE IS A REAL CHALLENGE FOR ALL OF US.** [Genesis 18:19](#) "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." (NKJV)
 - D. **GOD WAITS TO RESTORE US WHEN WE FALL** [Psalm 51]

I KINGS: The book of Kings is about kings. There are 19 Kings [all bad] in the Northern Kingdom and 19 [8 good and 11 bad] in the Southern. As Saul who had no heart for God, David who had a whole heart for God and Solomon who only had half a heart for Him - these 38 are a mixture of all three. The book of First Kings records the lives of the people of Israel as they lived "In the Eyes of the Lord"[11:6; 14:22; 15:5, 11, 26, 34; 16:7, 19, 25, 30; 21:20, 25, 22:43, 52]. This expression is repeated 14x in this book. We all need to ponder the theme of this book: to live IN THE SIGHT OF GOD!

- I. Solomon: Forty Years
 - A. Good Start 1-4
 - B. Great Choices 5-8
 - C. God Given fame and fortune 9-10
 - D. Grievous Ending 11
- II. Divided Kingdom: Eighty Years
 - A. Rehoboam Complex: forsake wisdom 12
 - B. Two new kingdoms, two old problems: idolatry and disobedience 13-16
 - C. Elijah: God's Man stands alone 17-19
 - D. Ahab: the worst 20-22
- III. **FOUR GREAT TRUTHS GLEANED FROM THIS BOOK:**
 - A. **GOD KEEPS HIS WORD SO WE SHOULD SEARCH IT DAILY.**
 - 1. **GOD WILL JUDGE THE APOSTASY** [[1 Kings 8:46; 12:25-33](#)]
 - 2. **GOD HATES FALSE WORSHIP** [1 Kings 11:33](#) I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon's father, did. (NIV)
 - 3. **GOD PUNISHES DISOBEDIENCE** [1 Kings 13:21](#) He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the LORD says: `You have defied the word of the LORD and have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. [1 Kings 13:34](#) This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth. (NIV)
 - 4. **GOD DOESN'T FORGET HIS WARNINGS** [1 Kings 16:34](#) In Ahab's time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken

by Joshua son of Nun. (NIV) [Galatians 6: 7-8](#)
Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (NIV)

- B. GOD REWARDS OBEDIENCE SO WE SHOULD OBEY HIM ALWAYS!**
 - 1. **REMEMBER SOLOMON: HIS WISDOM FROM GOD WAS KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD.** [4: 29-34]
 - 2. **REMEMBER ELIJAH ELIJAH: STANDING ALONE BY FAITH** I Kings 17-18
 - a) In [I Kings 17: 7](#) Elijah finds the place of Faith: Faith emerges from Real Need
 - b) In [I Kings 17: 10-12](#) Elijah finds the Test of Faith: Faith challenges our deepest Fears
 - c) In [I Kings 17: 15-16](#) Elijah finds the Product of Faith: Faith enables us to experience Real Blessings.
- C. GOD SEEKS DEVOTION SO WE SHOULD WORSHIP HIM WHOLEHEARTEDLY!**
 - 1. He wants our Hearts [9: 4].
 - 2. He wants our Trust [18: 21]
- D. GOD EXPECTS PRIORITY SO WE SHOULD SEEK HIM FIRST!** David wanted a house for God [5: 3] more than his own wealth. He became a man after God's own heart. Solomon wanted a house for both God and himself. He built God's first. His house was five times larger than the Temple, and took twice as long to build! [6: 38-7: 1] Solomon defected from God in the end. As God looks around the earth, does He find you looking at Him with all your heart? [Deuteronomy 4: 29](#)
But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

II KINGS: "Serving God" During the period covering the last 130 years of Israel and the last 250 years of Judah, II Kings records the response of the people to these prophets in the order they spoke and wrote: Elijah [*875-855 BC], Elisha [*855-795], Obadiah [840-825], Joel [825-810], Jonah [*785-770], Amos [*765-755], Hosea [*755-715], Isaiah [740-692], Micah [735-700], Nahum [650-620], Zephaniah [635-623], Jeremiah [625-575], Habakkuk [620-608], Daniel [605-535], Ezekiel [595-560]. The sad truth remains -- few listened to God speaking through them. God's servants listen to His Words. Second Kings stands as a book about Servants. God has good servants and bad servants. He rewards the good and punishes the bad. Life is all about who we will serve. In this book we see portraits of failed opportunities to serve God as well as beautiful lives of service for Him. Who are you serving today? God or yourself? We can draw an incredible wealth of lessons on servanthood from this small book. Here are no less than ten powerful components of those who serve God.

- I. **A SERVANT OF GOD IS EMPOWERED FOR MINISTRY :** There must be Absolute Surrender. Elisha showed this at his calling in [I Kings 19: 19-21](#). He patterned it in his daily life.
- II. **A SERVANT OF GOD FOCUSES ON THE SOURCE OF PROBLEMS.** [2: 19-22]
- III. **A SERVANT OF GOD KNOWS THE SECRET OF HUMILITY** [3: 15-25] because the way God sent water to aid Israel in the battle against Moab has a lesson on the way the Spirit of God works.
- IV. **A SERVANT OF GOD SERVES BY SUFFICIENCY OF THE SPIRIT** [4: 1-7] as is portrayed in the Widow's oil miracle.
 - A. **IMPOSSIBLE DEBT:** She had a humanly impossible situation [4: 1] one only God can fix. So we are impossibly indebted to the lost world around us. [Romans 1: 14-15](#) I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. (NIV)
 - B. **INEXHAUSTIBLE RESOURCES:** Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit and as she poured into empty vessels the

- oil never ran out. So the Holy Spirit will flow out of us like rivers of water into empty dry and thirsting lives around us. [John 7:38-39](#) Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (NIV)
- C. **INCREDIBLE SUPPLY:** The provision was for more than just the debt, it covered the daily supply also [4:7]
- V. **A SERVANT OF GOD HAS GENUINE POWER** [4:8-37] as demonstrated in the inability of Gehazi.
- VI. **A SERVANT OF GOD DECLARES THE GOSPEL OF A HUMBLE AND CONTRITE APPROACH TO GOD** [5:1-27] as demonstrated in Naaman's healing.
- VII. **A SERVANT OF GOD WILL REPENT AND RETURN WHEN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT DEPARTS THEIR LIFE** [6:1-7] as illustrated in the miracle of the restored ax head.
- A. **BEWARE:** Christians can lose the cutting edge for ministry by quenching the Holy Spirit.
- B. **STOP:** No work can proceed without the axehead. The self generated service does nothing more than chopping with an ax handle accomplishes in felling trees. [John 15:5](#) "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (NIV)
- C. **GO BACK:** The prophets went back to where the axehead was lost [6:6]. We need to go back to where we lost the blessing and get it back! [Revelation 2:5](#) Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (NIV)
- VIII. **A SERVANT OF GOD IS AWARE OF GOD'S PROTECTION** [6:8-23] as illustrated by the opening of the servants eyes and the blinding of the Syrian army.
- A. Elisha lived with an awareness he was surrounded by God's powerful army.
- B. When God intervenes He renders our enemies Helpless [6:18], Hopeless [6:21] and Powerless [6:22-23].
- IX. **A SERVANT OF GOD SEES THE LORD IN ALL OF LIFE.**
- A. **GOD IS THE LORD OF HISTORY -- SERVE HIM!** He shaped Judah and Israel's future. He directed Naaman and Hazeel of Syria [5; 8:7-15].
- B. **GOD IS LORD OF THE UNIVERSE -- TRUST HIM!** His armies are present on earth though invisible [6:15-17].
- C. **GOD IS LORD OF THE INEXHAUSTIBLE RESOURCES -- DRAW UPON HIM** [4:1-7 oil; enemy [army 19:35](#); etc.].

I CHRONICLES: The Book of First Chronicles is a retelling of the history of God's people from the vantage point of the TEMPLE and the Worship of the True God. This emphasizes their relationship to God. The first 9 chapters give 3,500 years of continuous human genealogical history. This is unparalleled in all the history of the world. The sacred line of redemption and promise is very important to God. And each individual had an opportunity to serve God. The three elements of a right relationship deal with their INWARD, OUTWARD and UPWARD response to God. They were to WORSHIP [upwardly], they were to OBEY [inwardly], they were to BE GOD'S LOYAL PEOPLE [outwardly].

- I. A general outline of the book could be:
- A. The People of the Lord [1-9]
- B. The Anointed of the Lord [10-12]
- C. The Ark of the Lord [13-16]
- D. The Covenant of the Lord [17-21]
- E. The Temple of the Lord [22-29]
- II. There are three elements of a right relationship illustrated in this book.
- A. **THE UPWARD RELATIONSHIP OF WORSHIP**
1. **SCRIPTURAL WORSHIP IS FILLED WITH GODLY JOY:** First [Chronicles 13:8](#) David and all the Israelites were celebrating with all their

- might before God, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals and trumpets. (NIV)
2. **SCRIPTURAL WORSHIP IS FILLED WITH GODLY MUSIC.** Notice the instruments in [13:8](#); [15:16](#), [28](#).
 3. **SCRIPTURAL WORSHIP IS FILLED WITH GODLY FORM.** David learned God is Serious about Proper Worship: [1 Chronicles 15:2](#) Then David said, "No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister before him forever."
- B. **SCRIPTURAL WORSHIP IS FILLED WITH HOLINESS. CONSECRATION IS NEEDED:** [1 Chronicles 15:12](#) He said to them, "You are the heads of the Levitical families; you and your fellow Levites are to consecrate yourselves and bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it.
- C. **SCRIPTURAL WORSHIP IS FILLED WITH HUMILITY. GOD ALONE IS WORTHY:** [1 Chronicles 16:29-30](#) ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. (NIV)
- III. **THE INWARD RELATIONSHIP OF OBEDIENCE**
- A. Saul was removed because of Disobedience [1 Chronicles 10:13-14](#)
 - B. Uzzah was killed for Irreverence [1 Chronicles 13:9-10](#)
 - C. David is blessed for Obedience [1 Chronicles 14:10-14](#)
- IV. **THE OUTWARD RELATIONSHIP OF LOYALTY**
- A. They were to TRUST GOD. HE KEEPS HIS WORD First [Chronicles 11:2-3](#) In the past, even while Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD your God said to you, "You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler." When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, he made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel, as the LORD had promised through Samuel. (NIV)
 - B. They were to SERVE GOD. SERVICE TO HIS GLORY First [Chronicles 22:5](#) David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations. Therefore I will make preparations for it." So David made extensive preparations before his death. (NIV)

II CHRONICLES: From Solomon [970 BC] to the collapse of the Judean Monarchy, the exile of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 586 BC, this book trace 384 years of people living in the sight of God. As a Divine Documentary the life of each king is exposed. Prosperity or Adversity came from their relationship with God. The interesting feature of this book is that each life has a lesson to be learned. More than just a narrative, powerful warnings and challenges abound. In the light of such a gloomy era of history, God gives His people hope in their godly kings, in their Gracious God and in His Sovereign hand in history as the last verses of this book point out. If any one verse could capture what God was saying to His people it would be in [2 Chronicles 15:2](#) And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. (NKJV). Some good Kings:

1. ASA - Although he destroys foreign altars and idols, conquers Ethiopia against great odds through his trust in God, and restores the altar of the Lord, yet he fails to trust God when threatened by Israel.
2. JOASH - Although he repairs the temple and restores the worship of God, when Jehoiada the priest dies, Joash allows the people to abandon the temple and return to idolatry.
3. UZZIAH - He begins well with the Lord and is blessed with military victories. However, when he becomes strong, he

- proudly and presumptuously plays the role of a priest by offering incense in the temple and therefore is struck with leprosy.
4. HEZEKIAH - He repairs and reopens the temple and puts away the altars and idols set up by his father, Ahaz. Judah is spared destruction by Assyria because of his righteousness. His reforms are given only a few verses in Kings but three chapters in Chronicles.
 5. JOSIAH - A leader in reforms and spiritual revival, he centers worship around the temple, finds the law and obeys it and reinstates the Passover.
- I. **GOD IS HOLY:** [2 Chronicles 19:2](#) And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD *is* upon you. (NKJV)
 - A. LIVE AS TEMPLES FOR HIM
 - B. LOVE LOYALTY TO HIM
 - C. LIVE SEPARATED UNTO HIM
 - II. **GOD IS SOVEREIGN:** [2 Chronicles 18:33](#) Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." (NKJV)
 - A. **WORSHIP KNOWING HIM. HE IS AWESOME:** [II Chronicles 2:6](#) But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who *am* I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him? (NKJV) [II Chronicles 6:18](#) But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! (NKJV)
 - B. **WALK FEARING HIM.** He holds our very BREATH: [Daniel 5:23](#)
 - III. **GOD IS OMNIPOTENT;** [2 Chronicles 20:6-12](#). HOPE only in Him [Psalm 73:25](#) Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You. (NKJV) [Romans 15:13](#) Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (NKJV)

EZRA: While Gautama Buddha was living and teaching in India [c. 560-480 BC], Confucius in China [551-479 BC] and Socrates in Greece [470-399 BC] the One True and Living God sent His servant Ezra. As the Lord's chosen messenger he was to stir up the Remnant to return to their God. From 457 BC [the dates of the events in Ezra 7-10] and 444 BC when Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem this book was written by Ezra. Tradition ascribes two of the great spiritual events of the past to Ezra. He is credited with the collection of all the Old Testament into one unit and with the founding of the first synagogue. Other traditions credit him with leading the gathering that defended the spurious writings from being put into the Scriptures. All told he was a great servant of the Lord! A brief sketch of history can help us fit many biblical events into a proper sequence.

538-515 BC	483-473 BC	457 BC	444-c. 425 BC
Zerubbabel	Esther	Ezra	Nehemiah
Ezra 1-6	Esther	Ezra 7-10	Nehemiah
1st return	-	2nd Return	3rd Return

We can outline this book into two clear sections:

- I. The Return under Cyrus by [Zerubbabel 1:1-6:22](#) and the Rebuilding of the Temple
- II. The return under Artaxerxes by [Ezra 7:1-10:44](#) and the Rebuilding of the People.

God had told the Jews they would return in the writings of Jeremiah 70 years before it happened. Isaiah had also written 170 years before, that the one who would accomplish the bidding of God was not even a believer. He would be a pagan king

named Cyrus! God names him before he even was born . . .

The two themes that run throughout this book are: Consecration and Separation.

- I. **GOD WANTS CONSECRATED SERVANTS!** Consecration is seen in the desire the people and their leaders had to restore the true worship of the Lord. The people of God faced great opposition, their adversaries were half breeds from the time of II Kings 17. Pagans imported by the Assyrians to hold the land for the kingdom of Assyria. These semi-heathen Samaritans were the chief of problems [in 4:1, 9, 10](#). They were taught to fear God and serve idols, and that they did. They are Consecrated at the Altar = Cross of Christ [Ezra 3:2](#) Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as [it is] written in the law of Moses the man of God. (KJV)
- II. **GOD WANTS SEPARATED SERVANTS!** Separation = no intermarriage [Ezra 9:1](#) When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. (NKJV). Separation is seen in the work of Ezra. He was earnest in his desire to purify the people of God and never turned back. He found 112 cases of intermarriage in direct disobedience to Mosaic law and dealt with every one of them.
 - A. **WORLDLINESS BLOCKS!** [1 John 2:15-17](#) Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that [is] in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (NKJV) [James 4:4](#) Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (NKJV)
 - B. **PILGRIMHOOD BRINGS!** [Hebrews 11:13](#) These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced [them] and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (NKJV)
 - C. **ONE MASTER BLESSES!** [Matthew 6:24](#) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (NKJV)
- III. **EZRA TEACHES PRECIOUS TRUTHS ABOUT GOD, WORSHIP AND SIN.**
 - A. **THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH CAN BE KNOWN:** [Ezra 1:2](#) Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which [is] in Judah.
 - B. **THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH CAN BE WORSHIPED:** [Ezra 3:11-13](#) And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: "For [He is] good, For His mercy [endures] forever toward Israel." Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' [houses,] old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, 13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off. (NKJV) [Ezra 6:16](#) Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the

- dedication of this house of God with joy. (NKJV)
- C. **THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH CAN BE SINNED AGAINST:** [Ezra 9:3-4](#) So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. 4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice. (NKJV)

IV. **EZRA TRACES THE MAJOR STEPS IN THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIANS LIFE.** These are traced through the steps the Remnant of Israel had to take in following God.

- A. **THEY HAD TO RETURN TO THE LAND** [1-2] This is confession and obedience, back to a proper relationship with God. [1 John 1:9](#) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NKJV)
- B. **THEY HAD TO REBUILD THE ALTAR** [3:1-6] This is the renewal of their position as the chosen sons and daughters of God. This speaks of our consecration as we return to the foot of the cross and reaffirm His ownership. [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#) Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit [who is] in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (NKJV)
- C. **THEY HAD TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE** [3:8-13] This was their service and witness in action. This speaks of the need we have to a proper role and relationship with worship in their lives. [Matthew 4:10](#) Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" (NKJV)
- D. **THEY HAD TO RESIST AND OVERCOME ADVERSARIES** [4] This is learning how to deal with TEMPTATION- [2 Timothy 2:22](#) Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (NKJV)
- E. **THEY HAD TO LISTEN TO THE PROPHETS** [5:1-6:14] This has to do with our relationship to the Word and the Spirit [Colossians 3:16](#) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (NKJV)
- F. **THEY HAD TO FINISH THE TEMPLE** [6:15-22] This speaks of the walk of the believer in fullness of the Spirit and in constant worship. [Romans 12:1-2](#) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, [which is] your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what [is] that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJV).

NEHEMIAH: Nehemiah models sainthood. Sensitive and yielded he serves God. Faithful and transparent he shows godliness. His characteristics read like the want ads for biblical ministry in the 90's - "Powerful Team Builder", "Fervent Man of Prayer", "Humble Servant", "Godly Politician" and so on. What can we learn from him? More than could be shared in one study. We can survey his life and the book that bears his name and glean three practical insights, treasures from his legacy. Nehemiah models: Godly Character, Godly Prayers and Godly Leadership.

I. **NEHEMIAH: GODLY CHARACTER**

- A. **HE GRIEVED WHEN GOD'S NAME WAS NOT HONORED:** [Nehemiah 2:2](#) so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, (NIV)
- B. **HE MODELED DEPENDENCE UPON GOD:** [Nehemiah 2:4](#) The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I

- prayed to the God of heaven, (NIV)
- C. **HE PRACTICED GLORIFYING GOD:** [Nehemiah 2:8-9](#) And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests. So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me. (NIV)
 - D. **HE SHARED GOD'S WORK IN HIS LIFE:** [Nehemiah 2:18](#) I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, Let us start rebuilding. So they began this good work. (NIV)
 - E. **HE FEARED GOD:** [Nehemiah 5:15](#) But the earlier governors -- those preceding me -- placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. (NIV)
- II. **NEHEMIAH: GODLY LEADERSHIP.** He demonstrated elements of Godly Leadership. Nehemiah lives out proper ways to deal with obstacles and opponents.

ESTHER: The God who is in control ! As long as man has been on earth Satan has sought to derail the plan of redemption. Cain kills Abel. God has to exterminate the contaminated race except for Noah and kin. Babel unites the world against God. Abram is chosen. The Jews are persecuted first by Egypt then by Amalek. Nowhere is the drama of God's plan and Satan's attack more clearly seen than in the backdrop of Esther.

- Haman [mentioned 45x in the Scriptures; literally "magnificent", chief minister of Ahasuerus, enemy of Mordecai and the Jews, who plotted to kill the Jews but, being foiled by Esther, was executed, with his family, on the post he had made for Mordecai]. Haman was the last descendent of the Jew killing Amalekites [3:1] poised to at last exterminate the people of the Covenant.
- Mordecai [mentioned 60x in the Scriptures; literally "little man" cousin and adoptive father of queen Esther; son of Jair of the tribe of Benjamin; deliverer under Divine providence of the children of Israel from the destruction plotted by Haman the chief minister of Ahasuerus; institutor of the feast of Purim; a Jew who returned from exile with Zerubbabel] a faithful and obedient descendent of Saul [2:5] is the tool God uses to complete His plan for the Amalekites.

- I. Outline:
 - A. The Selection of Esther as [Queen 1:1-2:21](#)
 - B. The Elimination of the Jews planned by [Haman 2:22-5:1](#)
 - C. The Exultation of Mordecai over [Haman 5:2-8:4](#)
 - D. The Emancipation of the Jews from their death [threat 8:5-10:3](#)
- II. The book of Esther is a skillfully crafted book demonstrating the unfailing control of God. Our Lord is seen in the seemingly insignificant coincidences of life that together form the tapestry of His providential directing all things together for good. [Romans 8:28](#) And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to [His] purpose. (NASB)
- III. God's sovereign rule is assumed though never stated throughout the book. This makes His power even more vivid because it is seen but never mentioned. [Esther 4:12-16](#) And they related Esther's words to Mordecai. Then Mordecai told [them] to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" Then Esther told [them] to reply to Mordecai, "Go,

assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." (NASB)

IV. The Major themes of the Book of Esther

A. GOD HAS PROMISED DELIVERANCE FOR HIS PEOPLE !

B. GOD HAS PROMISED CONFLICT FOR HIS PEOPLE.

1. God is our Victory. Jehovah-nissi, our Banner as He fights the enemies of His Kingdom for us. [Exodus 17:8-10](#), 14-16
2. We need to seek His intervention in the battles of life. [Exodus 17:11](#)
3. God commands them to destroy their enemies completely. As we are to also through Christ.
 - a) The flesh is our foe. [Colossians 3:5](#)
Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (NASB)
 - b) The Holy Spirit is jealous for our whole hearted devotion. [James 4:5](#) Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? (NASB)

C. GOD HAS PROMISED REST FOR HIS PEOPLE!

V. The Conclusion

A. **GOD IS AT WORK GUIDING HIS PLAN FROM START TO FINISH.** [Philippians 1:6](#) Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ: (KJV)

B. GOD WILL DEFEAT HIS ENEMIES WHOEVER THEY MAY BE! HE ALWAYS WINS

1. His Sovereign plans are never frustrated . . .
2. Human hatred and bitterness always lead to personal destruction as in Haman.
3. God uses regular people like us who will obey Him. [2 Chronicles 16:9](#) For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of [them] whose heart [is] perfect toward him. (KJV)

[1] Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, p. 140.

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