



Servants' Preparation Program



Coptic Orthodox
Diocese of the
Southern
United States

*"For I have given you an example,
that you should do as I have done to you"
John 13:15*

Coptic Orthodox
Diocese of the Southern United States

OT 102
The Historical Books

Servants' Preparation Program

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✦ The Holy Book of Joshua

✦ Title and Authorship:

The book is named after the man who is figured most prominently in it, Joshua. Bible scholars ascribe the book to Joshua himself as the main author with minor additions made by Eleazar the high priest and his son Phinehas. This book was written around 1390 B.C.

✦ Historical Background:

The holy book of Joshua covers a period of about 25 years and is a continuation of the history of Israel recorded in the Holy book of Numbers.

The holy book of *Joshua* describes the introduction of the people of Israel into the promised land of Canaan, through the conquest effected by Joshua, and the division of the land among the tribes of Israel. Joshua completed what Moses had commenced but had not been permitted to carry out, on account of his sin at the water of strife (Num. 20:12); Joshua had not only been called by the Lord, and consecrated by the laying on of the hands of Moses, to accomplish this work, but had also been favored with direct revelations from God, and with his miraculous help in the execution of it.

The Book of Joshua emphasizes that the conquest of Canaan was a direct fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. God was fighting for the Israelites and giving them the land in the process. Since God was demonstrating His faithfulness to Israel, He expected Israel to be faithful to His covenant with them. Possessing the land was based on their obedience to His law (23:9–13, 15, 16; Deut. 4:1, 25–27, 40; 6:17, 18). In fact, the Book of Joshua portrays the complete possession of the land as the result of Joshua's obedience to God's commands (10:40; 11:20, 23; 23:9–13).

Conquering the land enabled Israel to experience God's *rest*, which He had promised to the Israelites from the beginning (1:13, 15; 11:23; 14:15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1). "The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers" (21:44).

In addition to emphasizing the importance of faithfulness to the covenant (1:7, 8; 22:5; 23:6, 16; 24:15), Joshua records two ceremonies dedicated to the renewal of the covenant. The first was at Mount Ebal, where Joshua built an altar to the Lord, offered sacrifices, and copied and read the law of Moses (8:30–35). The second was at Shechem (ch. 24), where Joshua wrote the words of Israel's covenant renewal in "the Book of the Law of God" and erected a large stone as a witness and memorial to the agreement (24:25–27). Both ceremonies impressed on the people's minds and hearts their responsibility to follow God alone and to keep His instructions.

At the end of the conquest, the Israelites had a new challenge before them. The intensity of the battle was gone. Now the Israelites had to demonstrate their faithfulness to God in the ordinary activities of everyday life.

✦ Purpose of the Book:

- The Book of Joshua emphasizes these truths:
 1. God acts in history to fulfill His promises to Abraham and his descendants.
 2. God seeks to provide rest for His people.
 3. God has ethical expectations of His people.
 4. God punishes a disobedient people.
 5. God will win the victory.

✦ Outline of the Book

- I. **Division of the land 13:1–21:45**
 - A. Preparations for entering the land 1:1–18
 - B. Two spies in Jericho 2:1–24
 - C. Crossing of the Jordan 3:1–5:1
 - D. Ritual preparations 5:2–15
 - E. Conquest of Jericho 6:1–27
 - F. Covenant disobedience and conquest of Ai 7:1–8:29
 - G. Covenant affirmations 8:30–35
 - H. The Gibeonite treaty 9:1–27
 - I. The southern and northern campaigns 10:1–11:23
 - J. The list of conquered kings and lands 12:1–24
- II. **Division of the land 13:1–21:45**
 - A. The command to distribute the land 13:1–7
 - B. The land east of the Jordan 13:8–33
 - C. The distribution west of the Jordan 14:1–19:51
 1. Introduction 14:1–5
 2. Caleb's inheritance 14:6–15
 3. Judah's inheritance 15:1–63
 4. Joseph's inheritance 16:1–17:18
 5. The other tribes' inheritance 18:1–19:51
 - D. The cities of refuge and the cities of the Levites 20:1–21:45
- III. **Farewells 22:1–24:33**
 - A. Joshua's farewell to the tribes east of the Jordan 22:1–34
 - B. Joshua's first farewell to all Israel 23:1–16
 - C. Joshua's second farewell to all Israel 24:1–28
 1. Introduction and review of the past 24:1–13
 2. Covenant affirmations 24:14–28
 - D. Conclusion: burial notices 24:29–33

✠ Main Characters

Joshua

- He was the son of Nun, an Israelite of the tribe of Joseph (half-tribe of Ephraim) born in Egypt, who was a young man at the time of the Exodus (Ex 33:11)
- His name was Hosea ("salvation"), but Moses called him Jehoshua or Joshua ("God saves")
- He was Chosen by Moses to be his assistant or personal attendant (Ex 24:13; 32:17; 33:11)
- He was present on the mountain when Moses received the Law (Ex 24:13ff)
- He was guardian of the tent of meeting when Moses met with God (Ex 33:11)
- He was given charge of a detachment of Israelites to repel an Amalekite attack at Rephidim (Ex 17:9)
- He was one of the twelve spies sent into the land who trusted in the Lord to give the land to the people (Numbers 13:8; 14:30)
- He was commissioned by God to become leader when Moses died (Deut 31:14f, 23).
- He courageously served as a godly servant before the Lord to bring the people into the promised land

Rahab

- Hebrew name meaning, "broad" or "large"
- Harlot in Jericho who hid two Hebrew spies Joshua sent there to determine the strength of the city (Josh. 2:1).
- When the king of Jericho learned of the spies' presence, he sent men to arrest them. Rahab outsmarted the king and hid the men on her roof, sending the arresting officers on a false chase toward the Jordan River.
- In return for her help Joshua spared her and her family when the Hebrews destroyed Jericho (Josh. 6:17-25)
- Matthew named Rahab as Boaz' mother (1:5) in his genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ, making her one of the Lord's ancestors.
- Hebrews 11:31 lists Rahab among the heroes of faith.

✠ The Lord Jesus Christ in the holy book of Joshua:

- The Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in the book as Joshua himself was a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The name Joshua, originally "Hoshea" (Num 13:8), meaning "salvation," Moses changed to "Joshua" (*ψηοσηυα*, Heb.), meaning "Jehovah is salvation" (Num 13:16). In Aramaic that name was shortened to *Ψεσηυα*, which in Greek became *Ψεουσ*, spelled "Jesus" in English.
- Joshua led the Israelites to the possession of their inheritance in the Promised Land, just as the Lord Jesus Christ will guide us into the possession of eternal life. the Lord Jesus Christ brings the people of God into a promised rest (Heb. 4:8-9); intercedes for

His own continually (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25); and enables them to defeat their enemies (Rom. 8:37; Heb. 2:14-15).

- Joshua interceded for Israel when they sinned (7:6-9), as the Lord Jesus Christ does for us (1 John 2:1; Heb 7:25).
- Another aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ's nature is that in Him the promise was fulfilled. At the end of his life, Joshua testified, "Not one word has failed of all the good words that Jehovah your GOD has said to you" (23:14). GOD had faithfully sustained and preserved his people, bringing them out of the desert and guiding them into the Promised Land. He will do the same for us through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Promise.
- The scarlet string in Rahab's window (2:18,21) illustrates the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. This signal saved Rahab and her family from death. Thus also, the Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood hanging on the cross to rescue us from death.

✦ The Holy Book of Judges

✦ Title and Authorship:

The book derives its title from the twelve heroes of Israel whose deeds it records. Jewish tradition ascribed its authorship to Samuel. The book was written after the last event recorded in it (about 1050 BC)

✦ Historical Background:

The Holy Book of Judges relates fragments of Israel's history from the death of Joshua to the beginning of Samuel's ministry a period of 350 years.

The judges were military leaders sent by God to aid and to relieve His people in time of external danger. They exercised their activities in the interval of time between the death of Joshua and the institution of the monarchy in Israel. Six of them, namely Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson are treated in some detail and have accordingly been styled the Major Judges. The other six, of whose activities this book preserves but a summary record, are called the Minor Judges.

During the time of the judges the people of Israel established themselves in the complete possession of the land that had been given them for an inheritance

They had to fight the Canaanites who remained in the land exterminating them, and, when settled in this inheritance as the congregation of the Lord, to set up the covenant concluded with God at Sinai

They soon grew weary of the task of fighting against the Canaanites and destroying them, and contented themselves with making them merely tributary; in fact, they even began to form friendships with them, and worship their gods.

As a punishment for this, the Lord gave them over to their enemies, so that they were repeatedly oppressed and deeply humiliated by the Canaanites, and the nations that were living round about Canaan.

The Lord promised to help the nation of Israel in carrying on the conflict with the remaining Canaanites, on condition that they adhere to Him, and willingly obey His commandments. So whenever they repented and turned again in their distress to the Lord their God, He raised up helpers and deliverers for them in the persons of the judges, whom He filled with the power of His Spirit, so that they smote the enemy, and delivered both the people and the land from their oppression.

The key to the conquest of Canaan is clear: *The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and who had seen all the great deeds of the LORD, which He had done for Israel (Judges 2:7).* After Joshua's death there was no God-appointed national leader, and each tribe acted independently (1:1 – 2:23).

Most of the Israelite tribes disregarded the Lord's command to drive out all the Canaanites who remained in their territories. Instead, they compromised by gradually enslaving them. This compromise led to intermarriage with the Canaanites and, ultimately, to Israel's worship of their false gods.

The reason for this failure is obvious: *All of that generation was also gathered to their fathers, and another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the deeds He had done for Israel . . . They forsook the LORD and served Baal and Ashtoreths.* (Judg 2:10,13). Without a central leader or government, a time of spiritual failure and confusion prevailed.

Seven major apostasies are recorded when *the sons of Israel did evil in the Lord's sight and served the Baals* (false gods) (2:11; 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1). In each case, the Israelites were overcome by their enemies, lost their freedom, and were greatly impoverished; but, when the people prayed, God delivered them from their oppression. These judges acted under the authority of God, who was Israel's invisible King. As each successive judge was in submission to the Lord, a period of peace and prosperity would follow.

Chapters 17 – 21 contain insight into the Israelites' moral and spiritual degradation that prevailed preceding the time when Samuel became a prophet of God and their judge.

✦ The Role of a Judge:

- One who delivered the people
- One who ruled in Israel before the time of deliverance (4:4)
- One who ruled in Israel after the time of deliverance (8:28; 12:7)
- He/she had several tasks (Deut 16:18; 25:1):
- To turn the people back from idolatry and thus restore the authority of the law
- To vindicate God's righteousness by proving that He always remained faithful to His covenant with His people
- Since God was the King, He utilized the judge to implement His rulership over His people, Israel. The judge was invested with God's power and authority. The judges did not function properly. God faithfully delivers his people through weak judges.

✦ Purpose of the book

- To reveal that disobedience to the word of God inevitably results in defeat. In contrast, obedience to God and His word assures blessings in all areas of life.
- Whenever Israel rebelled against God, they were oppressed by pagan nations; when they repented, He raised up judges to deliver them (Judg 2:10-23)

✦ Outline of the Book

- I. Prologue: the stalled conquest of Canaan (1:1–2:5)
- II. Israel under the judges (2:6–16:31)

- A. Introduction to the period (2:6–3:6)
- B. The first judges (3:7–31)
- C. Deborah and Barak’s triumph over Canaan (4:1–5:31)
- D. Gideon’s defeat of the Midianites (6:1–8:32)
- E. Abimelech’s violent reign (8:33–9:57)
- F. Minor judges: Tola and Jair (10:1–5)
- G. Jephthah’s repulsion of the Ammonites (10:6–12:7)
- H. Other minor judges: Ibzan, Elon, Abdon (12:8–15)
- I. Samson and the Philistines (13:1–16:31)
 - 1. The Angel’s visit to Manoah and his wife (13:1–25)
 - 2. Samson’s exploits against the Philistines (14:1–15:20)
 - 3. Samson’s capture and last triumph (16:1–31)
- III. Epilogue: discord among the tribes (17:1–21:25)
 - A. Micah’s idolatry and the Danite conquest of Laish (17:1–18:31)
 - B. The Levite concubine and the war against Benjamin (19:1–21:25)

✦ Main Characters

Deborah:

- Name means ‘bee’
- A prophetess, “wife” of Lapidoth.
- Deborah roused the people of Israel against Jabin, the king of Hazor
- She became a “mother in Israel” (Judg. 4:6, 14; 5:7), and “the children of Israel came up to her for judgment” as she sat in her tent under the palm tree “between Ramah and Bethel.”
- She summoned Barak from Kadesh to take the command of 10,000 men and lead them to Mount Tabor. With his aid she organized this army.
- She gave the signal for attack, and the Hebrew host rushed down impetuously upon the army of Jabin, which was commanded by Sisera, and gained a great and decisive victory.
- In Judg. 5 is given the grand triumphal ode, the “song of Deborah,” which she wrote in grateful commemoration of that great deliverance

Gideon

- Name meaning, “one who cuts to pieces.”
- The fifth major judge of twelfth century Israel.
- He was also called Jerubbaal and was the son of Joash of the tribe of Manasseh.
- He judged for forty years (Judg. 6:11-8:35).
- Gideon was given the task of delivering the Israelites from the Midianites and Amalekites, desert nomads who repeatedly raided the country.
- Gideon was not a willing volunteer. Although he knew the will of God, twice he laid out the fleece in what seems an effort to avoid the will of God by imposing impossible conditions. God met his conditions both times and then set out the strategy that would guarantee victory for Israel.
- He led Israel to victory against the Midianites

- Gideon ended life on a sad note. He angrily punished Succoth and Penuel for not helping in his war against the Midianite kings (Judg. 8:1-17).
- He refused the people's offer to crown him king, testifying that only God was King (Judg. 8:22-23),
- He ordered the people to give him their golden earrings, taken as war spoil from the Ishmaelites. He made a worship symbol, an ephod, out of it and led his people astray with it (Judg. 8:24-27).
- His family did not follow his God (Judg. 8:33).

Samson

- Name means 'of the sun'
- the son of Manoah, born at Zorah.
- He was a "Nazarite unto God" from his birth, the first Nazarite mentioned in Scripture (Judg. 13:3-5; compare Num. 6:1-21).
- He married with a Philistine woman of Timnath (Judg. 14:1-5). It was an ill-assorted and unblessed marriage.
- His wife was soon taken from him and given "to his companion" (Judg. 14:20). For this Samson took revenge by burning the "standing corn of the Philistines" (Judg. 15:1-8), who, in their turn, in revenge "burnt her and her father with fire." Her death he terribly avenged (Judg. 15:7-19).
- During the twenty years following this he judged Israel
- After this we have an account of his exploits at Gaza (Judg. 16:1-3)
- , and of his infatuation for Delilah, and her treachery (Judg. 16:4-20), and then of his melancholy death (Judg. 16:21-31). He perished in the last terrible destruction he brought upon his enemies. "So the dead which he slew at his death were more [in social and political importance = the elite of the people] than they which he slew in his life."

✠ The Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Book of Judges:

- The people did not choose their judges but God appointed them to save His people from their enemies. God, before all ages, also chose to send His Only Son our Lord Jesus Christ to save His people.
- The Judges freed the people of Israel from slavery and the Lord Jesus Christ freed us from sin and moved us from slavery to adoption
- The judges went to war following the commandment of God and our Lord Jesus Christ came and was crucified to fulfill the will of God the Father.

✦ The Holy Book of Ruth

✦ Title and Authorship:

The Holy Book of Ruth is named after one of its main characters, a young woman from Moab. The only other book bearing the name of a woman is Esther. The incidents described in the book of Ruth occur in the time of the judges, most likely during the judgeship of Gideon. The book of Ruth forms a supplement to the book of Judges and an introduction to the books of Samuel, which give no account of David's ancestors.

✦ Historical Background:

The book of Ruth highlights our Lord's loving-kindness in selecting a Moabite woman to be included in His covenant with Israel, and to be one of only two women after whom books of the Bible are named. Ruth was also one of only four women mentioned in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5-6,16), demonstrating the love of God for all mankind.

The book of Ruth introduces us to the ancestors of King David. This is probably the best illustration of the blessings enjoyed by generations of godly people, which is the result of yielding to the divine leadership of almighty God.

The book tells us how Elimelech, Naomi, and their sons emigrated to Moab on account of a famine, how Elimelech died in Moab, how his sons married Moabite women, and how Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah were left in bereavement and poverty with the deaths of Mahlon and Chilion.

Ruth had a very strong desire for the God of Israel and His people, and she sought a relationship with God with great earnestness. Ruth went with Naomi back to Judah, to take refuge under the wings of the God of Israel, and how, when she was going out to glean in the fields to eke out an existence. She came to a field owned by Boaz, a near relation of Elimelech, and became acquainted with this honorable and gracious man. . Boaz was an upright "man of dignity", full of reverence for all of God's ordinances, and forthright in making practical application of godly principles.

Ruth learned that a redeemer existed. She waited patiently for the Lord's leading. From the moment she walked into Bethlehem, she had a good reputation in the community. She did not try to solve her own problems outside of the Lord's will by trying to find a man to marry.

In chapter 3 and 4 we see how Naomi directed Ruth to request levirate marriage with Boaz, how they followed all the legal forms of such an arrangement. The law provided for Boaz, as a kinsman-redeemer, to reclaim the deceased Elimelech's inheritance, to marry Ruth, and to raise a child to continue the lineage of Elimelech. An unnamed near kinsman (symbolic of the law) had the first legal right to redeem Elimelech's lost inheritance. He refused by saying that to marry Ruth, a Moabite, would . . . *ruin my*

own inheritance! . . . I can't redeem it! (Ruth 4:6). The law excluded Moabites from living among the Israelites: *An Ammonite or a Moabite may not enter the LORD's assembly; even down to the tenth generation* (Deut 23:3). The law cannot forgive or make exceptions; it can only expose our sins and condemn us. But, Ruth had forsaken her false gods by confessing her faith in the God of Israel. Boaz and Ruth were married and honored by the local people. For the rest of her life, Ruth enjoyed prosperity and a fruitful relationship with Boaz. David was her great grandson. Ruth, a Gentile, was in the line of the Lord Jesus Christ.

✚ Purpose of the Book

- To reveal how the mercy and providential care of God extends to both Jew and Gentile.
- God sends a redeemer

✚ Outline of the Book

- I. Sojourn in the land of Moab 1:1–22
 - A. Tragedy in Moab 1:1–5
 - B. Friendship and faith in Moab 1:6–22
- II. Ruth's first encounter with Boaz 2:1–23
 - A. Boaz's introduction 2:1–3
 - B. Boaz's discovery of Ruth 2:4–13
 - C. Boaz's concern for Ruth 2:14–23
- III. Ruth and Boaz at the threshing floor 3:1–18
 - A. Ruth and Naomi's daring decision 3:1–7
 - B. Boaz's delightful duty 3:8–18
- IV. Redemption of Ruth by Boaz 4:1–22
 - A. The relative's refusal to redeem 4:1–6
 - B. Boaz's choice to redeem 4:7–12
- C. The reward of redemption 4:13–22

✚ Symbols in the Holy Book of Ruth

- Ruth a symbol of the Church of the Gentiles
- Ruth the gentile rejected the idolatry teaching and chose the worship of the True God as symbol of the gentiles who will follow in love and faith the Lord Jesus Christ
- Ruth had the honor to marry Boaz as the church of gentiles will unite with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Ruth became a member of David's family as all the faithful will become members in the Lord Jesus Christ eternal kingdom
- RUTH provides a thorough picture of Redemption, through the agency of Boaz, the Kinsman-Redeemer, who is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in this respect.
- Redemption in Boaz, a type of the Lord Jesus Christ who assumed the right of "kinsman-redeemer," purchased the property inheritance for Naomi and took Ruth

as his wife. After making the necessary arrangements, *Boaz said to the elders . . . You are witnesses today that here and now I buy back everything belonging to Elimelech . . . for Naomi. I also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my own wife, in order to raise up the deceased man's name on his inheritance, that the name of the deceased man may not disappear* (Ruth 4:9-10; see also Leviticus 25:25-34,47-48; Deuteronomy 25:5-10).

- Through the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, for the third time God united both Jew and Gentile in the ancestry of David and of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Matthew 1:5-6; Luke 3:31-32). *There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise* (Galatians 3:28-29).

✦ The Holy Book of First Samuel

✦ Title and Authorship

First Samuel is appropriately named after Samuel, the principal character of the early narratives and the one who anointed Israel's first two kings, Saul and David.

First and Second Samuel were originally one book, "The Book of Samuel" in the Hebrew Scriptures. When these Scriptures were translated into Greek, around 150 B.C., the books of Samuel and Kings were brought together into a complete history of the Hebrew monarchy. This unit of Scripture was divided into four sections: First, Second, Third, and Fourth Kingdoms. Samuel and Kings were later separated again, but the divisions of the Greek translation persisted. The result was a First and Second Samuel and a First and Second Kings.

The authors of the books of Samuel were probably Samuel, Gad, and Nathan. Samuel wrote the first twenty-four chapters of the first book. Gad, the companion of David (1 Sam. 22:5), continued the history thus commenced; and Nathan completed it, probably arranging the whole in the form in which we now have it (1 Chr. 29:29).

✦ Historical Background:

The two books of *Samuel* contain the history of Israel from the appearance of Samuel as a prophet to the end of the reign of David. They include the renewal of the theocracy by the labors of Samuel, and the establishment of the earthly monarchy by Saul and David.

It is true we meet with certain prophets as early as the times of the judges; but the true founder of the Old Testament prophecy was Samuel. With whom the prophets first began their continuous labors, and the prophetic gift was developed into a power which exerted an influence, as strong as it was salutary, upon the future development of the Israelite state.

The Holy book of first Samuel tells how the Lord raised up Samuel, the son of the pious Hannah, who had been asked for of the Lord and consecrated to His service from his mother's womb, to be His prophet. God appeared to him continually at Shiloh; so that all Israel acknowledge him as the prophet appointed by the Lord, and through his prophetic labors was converted from dead idols to serve the living God. In consequence of this conversion, the Lord gave to the Israelites, in answer to Samuel's prayer, a complete and wondrous victory over the Philistines, by which they were delivered from the heavy oppression they had endured for forty years at the hands of these enemies. From that time forward Samuel judged all Israel. As he grew old, his sons, whom he appointed as judges in Beersheba were found dishonest (8:2, 3) and failed to walk in his steps. With such evil leaders as models, the people of Israel disregarded the word of God and refused to listen to His prophet Samuel (8:19).

Yet in the midst of widespread corruption and apostasy, there was a righteous remnant of Israelites who faithfully worshipped God (1:3). The worship center of Israel at this time was located at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was set up (1:3; Josh. 18:1). However, even the contents of the tabernacle were not left undisturbed during these tumultuous and evil times. The Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines (4:11). After a seven-month sojourn among the Philistine cities (5:1–6:16), the ark was returned to Beth Shemesh (6:19) and then kept at Kirjath Jearim (7:1) until David brought it to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:1–17).

During this time, the Israelites became dissatisfied with the abusive rule of the judges (8:3). The people longed for the glories of a monarchy such as they saw in the surrounding nations. So the Lord allowed the Israelites to have their way. He gave them a king like the other nations: the handsome and tall King Saul (10:1). Although Saul appeared to be well suited for leading a nation, his reign ended in tragedy because he ignored the word of God. Much of the action of First Samuel is associated with the tumultuous life, reign, and decline of Saul, contrasted with the rapid rise of the young and faithful David.

During this early period of the Israelite monarchy (c. 1050–970 B.C.), the great empires of the ancient Middle East were in a state of weakness. The Hittites of Asia Minor had passed into insignificance. Assyria was in a state of decline, and Egypt was weakened by internal conflict. The Philistines constituted Israel's main threat during this period. Their skill in working iron had given them a decided military and economic advantage over Israel. Yet the threat of the Philistines had a positive impact on Israel's political situation. It caused the infant nation to unite under the leadership of its first kings, Saul and David.

The reason why the name of Samuel is given to both these books, which form both in style and contents, an indivisible whole, is in all probability therefore, that Samuel not only inaugurated the monarchy in Israel by anointing Saul and David, but exerted so decided an influence upon the spirit of the government of both these kings. Through his prophetic labors, that even the latter may be regarded in a certain sense as the continuation of that reformation of the Israelite state which the prophet himself began.

✚ Purpose of the Book

- To record the life of Samuel, Israel's last judge
- To provide an official account of the rise of the monarchy during the time of Samuel
- To record the reign and decline of Saul, the first king
- To record the choice and preparation of David, Israel's greatest king.

✚ Outline of the Book

- I. The Preparations for the Monarchy (1:1-9:27).
 - A. Samuel's Birth and Childhood (1:1-28).
 - B. Hannah's Song (1 Sam 2:1-10).
 - C. The Situation at Shiloh (2:11-36).
 - D. Samuel's Call (3:1-21).

- E. The Ark (4:1-7:17).
- F. Selection of a King (8:1-9:27).
- II. The Period of Saul (10:1-31:13).
 - A. Saul's Ascendancy (10:1-14:52).
 - B. Saul's Rejection (15:1-35).
 - C. Saul and David (16:1-26:25).
 - D. Saul's Death (27:1-31:13).

✠ Main Characters

Samuel

- The name Samuel means 'Heard of God'
- He came as a result of God's answer to his mother's prayer for a child
- He was called to fill many different roles: judge, priest, prophet, counselor and God's man at a turning point in the history of Israel
- Samuel was willing to be one thing: God's servant
- Samuel showed that those whom God finds faithful in small things will be trusted with greater things
- He anointed the first two kings of Israel
- Was the last and most effective of Israel's judges
- His mistake is that he was unable to lead his sons into a close relationship with God

Saul

- Presented physically the ideal visual image of a king, tall with a striking appearance
- First God appointed king of Israel
- During his reign he had the greatest success when he obeyed God
- His failure resulted from acting on his own
- His leadership abilities did not match the expectations created by his appearance
- Jealous of David, he tried to kill him
- He specifically disobeyed God on several occasions

✠ The Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of 1 Samuel

- Samuel as a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Hannah song (1 Sam 1:2-10) resembles in occasion and content the song of St. Mary (Lk 1:46-55)
- Samuel was a prophet, a judge and a God chosen priest as our Lord Jesus Christ who is the source of these three positions, the kingship, the prophesy and the priesthood
- The Israelites refused Samuel and asked for a king as the Jews rejected the Lord Jesus Christ saying "We have no king but Caesar!" (Jn 19:15)
- Samuel was an intercessor between God and the people as the Lord Jesus Christ is our intercessor (1Tim 2:5)

✦ The Holy Book of Second Samuel

✦ Title and Authorship:

As in the case of 1 Samuel, the author of 2 Samuel is not named. Tradition assigns the authorship to Samuel (see 1 Samuel, “Title and Authorship”). The Book of 2 Samuel begins with the active rule of David over Judah and concludes with the strained latter days of his reign over the united monarchy. This prophetic history covers a period of about forty years (1010-970 B.C.).

✦ Historical Background:

Second Samuel covers the period from the death of Saul (c. 1010 B.C.) to the end of David’s career (c. 970 B.C.). During the forty years of his reign, David united the tribes together into a strong monarchy and transformed the young nation into a military power able to dominate surrounding nations.

After capturing the Jebusite fortress Jerusalem, David made it his capital. This new site became the powerful geographical base for the establishment of David’s empire. Then David began to free the Israelite territory from Philistine and Canaanite domination. In doing so, David extended his kingdom by military conquests to the north, south, east, and west (ch. 8).

In addition to military conquest, David was the first of Israel’s kings to use marriage alliances as an important dimension of the nation’s foreign policy. Marriage alliances between royal houses as a means of concluding treaties and cementing relationships between states were common occurrences in the ancient Middle East. The first such marriage alliance is alluded to in 3:3, where Absalom, David’s third son, is called “the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.”

David’s conquests and alliances gave him control of territory from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates. This was largely due to David’s strong military presence in comparison with the general weakness that characterized Egypt and Mesopotamia at this time. For a brief period, Israel was as strong as any nation of the ancient world.

The unifying theme of Second Samuel is the establishment of the kingdom of Israel, progressing from a diverse group of divided and warring tribes to a solidified kingdom under David. However the purpose for recording these events was not merely to have an “official” record of David’s reign. Throughout the narrative, there is a continuing interest in the rule of God over His people. The book emphasizes that it was God who rejected Saul for his disobedience, chose David for the throne, and disciplined David for his pride. God was still the true King of Israel.

It was in David that the true king of the kingdom of God under the Old Testament arose. A mighty warrior in conflict with the enemies of Israel, and yet at the same time a pious servant of the Lord. A man of true humility and faithful obedience to the word

and commandment of God. He not only raised the state of a lofty height of earthly power and glory, through the strength and justice of his rule, but who also built up the kingdom of God by reviving and organizing the public worship of God and by stimulating and fostering the true fear of God, through the cultivation of sacred song.

The key to David's successful reign was his relationship with the Lord. God had described him as a man after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). In his youth, David had demonstrated his strong faith in God by challenging a giant with only a few stones and his faith in God's strength (1 Sam. 17:45–51). In his adulthood, he continued to rely on God for guidance and strength (2:1; 5:19). Early in his reign, he demonstrated the importance of his religious convictions to all Israel by bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem in the midst of a lavish celebration before the Lord (6:1–23).

Following that, his eagerness to build a temple for the glory of the Lord was known to all (7:1–3). With such actions and the numerous songs he wrote in praise of God, David led the Israelites back to the true worship of God. Even when he sinned, he demonstrated to the people his repentant heart before the living God (12:13–23; 24:17–25). David's religious leadership was the most significant part of his reign.

Through all the triumphs and tragedies of David's reign, God was acting in the national and personal events of His people in order to accomplish His will. The Lord gave David a glimpse of His ultimate will in the promises He gave him, commonly called the Davidic covenant (7:12–16). In this unconditional covenant, God promised David an eternal dynasty, an eternal throne, and an eternal kingdom. Ultimately, a righteous King greater than David was coming. He would be David's son and would rule from David's throne forever (Isa. 9:7). This promised King is our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:31–33; John 1:49)

✦ Purpose of the Book:

- To Define the Monarchy of Israel as it related to the Rule of God over the nation. These books show the need of a king and both the wrong motives as well as the right motives in desiring a king. It has been said that Saul was a king after the heart of the people while David was a king after God's own heart.
- To Legitimize the Reign of King David.
- To Emphasize the Importance of Following the Lord and Obeying His Statutes.
- To Teach the Grace of God. In David, we are admitted to a wonderful picture of the mercy of God. Though he suffers greatly from the consequences of his sin, David is forgiven his sin and continues to trust in the Lord. From his experiences, we learn that failure can be overcome through repentance and faith.

✦ Outline of the Book

- I. David at Hebron (1:1-4:12).
 - A. Lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:1-27).
 - B. Battle Between David and Abner (2:1-32).
 - C. Conflict Between Joab and Abner (3:1-39).

- D. Death of Ishbosheth (4:1-12).
- II. David's Prosperity (5:1-10:19).
 - A. The Capital at Jerusalem (5:1-25).
 - B. The Return of the Ark (6:1-23).
 - C. The Davidic Covenant (7:1-29).
 - D. David's Campaigns (8:1-18).
 - E. David's Kindness to Saul's Family (9:1-13).
 - F. David's Ambassadors to Ammon Abused (10:1-19).
- III. David's Sin and Domestic Problems (11:1-21:22).
 - A. David's Adultery (11:1-27).
 - B. Nathan's Rebuke and David's Punishment (12:1-31).
 - C. Sin and Murder of Amnon (13:1-39).
 - D. Absalom's Estrangement from David (14:1-33).
 - E. Absalom's Revolution (15:1-18:33).
 - 1. Absalom's Capture of the Kingdom (15:1-37).
 - 2. Absalom's Solidification of Power (16:1-23).
 - 3. Absalom's Pursuit of David (17:1-29).
 - 4. Absalom's Defeat and Death (18:1-33).
 - F. David's Return to Power (19:1-20:26).
 - 1. The Preparations for Return (19:1-43).
 - 2. The Reestablishment of Authority (20:1-26).
 - G. Slaughter and Burial of Saul's Sons (21:1-22).
- IV. David's Final Years (22:1-24:25).
 - A. David's Song (2 Sam 22:1-51).
 - B. David's Heroes (23:1-39).
 - C. David's Sin in Taking the Census (24:1-25).

✠ The Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Book of 2 Samuel

- David the king was a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Both were from the tribe of Judah and both from Bethlehem
- David was a shepherd and our Lord called Himself the Good Shepherd
- David was a king and a prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ is the King of kings and higher than the prophets
- David was anointed king and our Lord was called the Messiah the Anointed
"Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (Ps 45:7)
- David started his practical life by defeating Goliath and the Lord Jesus Christ started His ministry by defeating the Satan in the wilderness
- Saul asked to kill David, so David escaped though he could have killed Saul. Herod asked to kill the Lord Jesus Christ, so he fled while he could have destroyed Herod
- David used to forgive those who trespassed against him. He forgave Saul and was upset when he dies, he also cried for the death of Absalom who wanted to kill him. Our Lord Jesus Christ forgave those who crucified Him
- David was betrayed by his son Absalom and the Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed by His disciple Judah

- David went to the valley of Kedron to the Mount of Olive before his son's attack and the Lord went to the same place before Judah's betrayal and His arrest.

✠ The Holy Books of First & Second Kings

✠ Title and Authorship

The books known as 1st and 2nd Kings were originally written to be a single work. The author is unnamed in the book, as is the case with most Old Testament historical narrative. He mentions using several source documents, three specifically:

- The book of the annals of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41).
- The book of the annals of the kings of Israel - mentioned some seventeen times in 1 Kings 14:29 - 2 Kings 15:31 (2 Sam 8:16; 20:24; 1 Kings 4:3; 2 Kings 18:18, 37; 2 Chronicles 34:8)
- The book of the annals of the kings of Judah - mentioned fifteen times in 1 Kings 14:29 - 2 Kings 24:5.

There is also an obvious quotation from three chapters of Isaiah (Isaiah 37-39) which appear verbatim in 2 Kings 19:1 - 20:19.

The author of the book is nowhere named in Scripture. Jewish tradition had it that Jeremiah was the author.

✠ Historical Background

The books of *Kings* carry on the history of the Old Testament kingdom of God through a period of 450 years, from the accession of Solomon to the Babylonian captivity.

All the kings of Judah and Israel are recorded in 1 & 2 Kings except for Saul. The purpose of 1 & 2 Kings is to illustrate the blessings that result from faithfulness and obedience to the Lord and His judgment upon unfaithfulness and disobedience.

✠ Introduction to First Kings

The first 11 chapters of 1 Kings focus attention primarily on the reign of Solomon. Chapters 12 — 22 cover about the first 80-100 years of the divided kingdom. During that time, four kings reigned over the southern kingdom from and eight over the northern kingdom at Samaria

As 1 Kings opens, David had reigned about 40 years. He was now an old man in ill health. Adonijah, the fourth (2 Samuel 3:2-5) and eldest surviving son of David, conspired to make himself king with Joab, David's nephew and head of the army, and Abiathar, head of the priesthood. These traitors did this knowing that the Lord had chosen Solomon as David's successor (1 Kings 2:15). The prophet Nathan warned Bathsheba of this conspiracy and he himself appeared before David to confirm it. David immediately abdicated and made Solomon king.

God's promise to his servant David was steadfastly fulfilled. God preserved the whole of the kingdom of David to his son Solomon, who had been chosen as his successor, and at the very commencement of his reign renewed His promise to him, so that Solomon was able to carry out of the work of building the temple; and under his wise and peaceful government in Judah and Israel every one could sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree.

David's final words to Solomon were “ *Keep the charge of the Lord [your] God, to walk in His ways, to keep . . . His Commandments . . . that [you may] prosper (do wisely) (2:3)* Solomon didn't take his father's advice seriously and it resulted in the division of the nation and widespread idol worship among the people.

It was not until the fourth year of Solomon's reign (2 Chron 3:1-2) that he began building the Temple (1 Kings 5:5). Then Solomon allowed himself to be drawn away by his foreign wives to turn from the Lord and worship idols, so the Lord chastened him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. Near the end of his 40-year reign, we read: *The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord (11:9)*. Then the final verdict was given: [Because you have] *not kept My Covenant . . . I will surely rend the kingdom from [you] (11:11)*. But God's mercy did not depart away from him, as He had promised to David (2 Sam. 7:14, 15).

Just days after Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided as prophesied. Ten tribes revolted under Solomon's servant Jeroboam, forming the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam established two new centers of worship to replace Jerusalem -- one at Dan in the north and the other at Bethel in the southern part of his kingdom. By replacing Jerusalem as the God-appointed place to offer sacrifices, he became known as *Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin (2 Kings 3:3; 10:29)*. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, reigned over Judah which included the small tribe of Benjamin from the capital, Jerusalem, and the temple.

About 60 years after the division, the prophet Elijah suddenly appeared to the evil King Ahab and courageously proclaimed the Word of the Lord (1 Kings 17:1 -- 2 Kings 2:11). Elijah was followed by his disciple Elisha (1 Kings 19:16 -- 2 Kings 13:20). Both were prominent prophets in the Northern Kingdom, proclaiming the necessity of unconditional loyalty to God

During the whole time that this one brother-nation was divided into two distinct kingdoms, which were frequently engaged in hostility with one another, the Lord preserved the throne to the seed of David; and the kingdom of Judah survived the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel 134 years, having as firm a political foundation in the unbroken succession of the royal family of David, as it had a strong spiritual foundation in the capital Jerusalem, with the temple which had been sanctified by the Lord as the dwelling-place of His name.

In the kingdom of the ten tribes, on the other hand, Jeroboam introduced the germ of what eventually led to its destruction, by establishing as the state religion the unlawful worship of the golden calves. The destruction of his house was at once foretold to him on account of this sin (1 Kings 14:7); and this threat was carried out in the person of his son (1 Kings 15:28).

As the kings of Israel who followed did not desist from this sin of Jeroboam, but, on the contrary, the dynasty of the house of Omri attempted to make the worship of Baal the leading religion of the kingdom, and the king and people gave no heed to the voice of the prophets, and did not return with sincerity of heart to the Lord, He gave up the sinful kingdom and people to the consequences of their sins, so that one dynasty overthrew another; and after the lapse of 250 years, the kingdom, which was already shattered by the frequently recurring civil wars, fell a prey to the Assyrians, by whom the whole land was conquered, and its inhabitants were led into captivity.

The kingdom of Judah was also hard pressed by this powerful empire, and brought to the very verge of destruction; but in answer to the prayer of the pious king Hezekiah, it was delivered and preserved by the Lord for His own and His servant David's sake, until at length the godless king Manasseh filled up the measure of its sins, so that even the good king Josiah could only suspend the destruction for a certain time, but could not ward it off altogether.

A short time after his death the judgment fell upon Judah and Jerusalem on account of the sins of Manasseh (2 Kings 23:26, 27; 24:3), when King Nebuchadnezzar came from Babylon, conquered the land, and laid it waste; and having taken Jerusalem, led away Jehoiachim to Babylon, with a considerable portion of the people. And when even Zedekiah, who had been raised by him to the throne, rebelled against him, the Chaldeans returned and put an end to the kingdom of Judah, by destroying Jerusalem and burning the temple, Zechariah himself being deprived of his sight, and led away into captivity with a large number of prisoners.

Yet even when Judah and its king were rejected and scattered among the heathen, the Lord did not leave His servant David without any light shining; but after Jehoiachim had been in prison for thirty-seven years, paying the penalty of his own and his father's sins, he was released from his imprisonment by Evil-merodach the king of Babylon, and his seat was placed above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27-30).

This joyful turn in the destinies of Jehoiachim, with which the books of Kings are brought to a close throws the first gleam into the dark night of the captivity of that better future which was to dawn upon the seed of David, and through it upon the people of Israel when they should be delivered out of Babylon.

✠ Purpose of the Book

- To contrast the lives of those who live for God and those who refuse to do so through the history of the kings of Israel and Judah
- To Give a Warning of the Consequences of Sin.
- To tell of the disastrous consequences of Israel's fall into idolatry.

✠ First Kings Outline

- I. The united kingdom 1:1–11:43
 - A. The decline of David and the exaltation of Solomon as king 1:1–2:12

- B. The establishment of the Solomonic kingdom 2:13–46
- C. The wisdom of Solomon 3:1–4:34
- D. The building program of Solomon’s kingdom 5:1–8:66
- E. The events of Solomon’s reign 9:1–11:43
- II. The divided kingdom 12:1–22:53
 - A. The accession of Rehoboam and the division of the kingdom 12:1–24
 - B. The early kings of the two nations 12:25–16:14
 - 1. The reign of Jeroboam in the northern kingdom 12:25–14:20
 - 2. The reigns of Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa in the southern kingdom 14:21–15:24
 - 3. The end of the first dynasty in the northern kingdom: Nadab 15:25–32
 - 4. The second dynasty in the northern kingdom: Baasha 15:33–16:14
 - C. The third dynasty in the northern kingdom: Omri 16:15–22:53
 - 1. The reign of Omri in the northern kingdom 16:15–28
 - 2. The reign of Ahab in the northern kingdom 16:29–22:40
 - a. Elijah and the drought 17:1–24
 - b. Elijah on Mt. Carmel 18:1–46
 - c. Elijah’s flight to Horeb 19:1–21
 - d. A prophet’s condemnation of Ahab 20:1–43
 - e. Elijah’s condemnation of Ahab 21:1–28
 - f. Micaiah’s prophecy of Ahab’s death 22:1–40
 - 3. The reign of Jehoshaphat in the southern kingdom and the accession of Ahaziah in the northern kingdom 22:41–53

✠ The Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of First Kings

- King Solomon as a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ:
- The Sonship: He was the son of David and our Lord Jesus Christ was called the Son of David
- The Kingdom: Solomon sat on the throne of his father David and our Lord Jesus Christ sits in His throne to judge the living and the dead for He is the Lord Jesus Christ the King (Lk 23:2,3)
- The Prophecy: Solomon prophesied on the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (Prov 2:12-20) and our Lord Jesus Christ is the King the Prophet and the High Priest
- Obedience: Solomon obeyed the commandments of his father David and our Lord Jesus Christ obeyed the Father until death
- The Name: Solomon means peace and our Lord is the king of Peace
- The Building of the temple: As Solomon build the temple and the glory of God appeared and the day of its consecration, our Lord build the Church and the Holy Spirit came upon His disciples and the believers on the Pentecost Day.
- How was Elijah a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ?

✦ Introduction to Second Kings

At the time 2 Kings opens, the majority of the Levites had left the idol-worshipping Northern Kingdom (Israel) and returned to Jerusalem and to God-ordained worship in His Temple (2 Chronicles 11:13-15).

The prophets Elijah and Elisha prophesied in Israel, as did Amos, Hosea, and Jonah. Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah prophesied during this time in Judah. These men of God exposed the nation's sins and appealed to the people to reject their idols and return to the Lord or experience defeat and the Lord's judgment.

The first 17 chapters of 2 Kings focus on the prophets Elijah and Elisha, as well as record the spiritual decline of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Chapter 17 ends with the captivity and relocation of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians.

Nineteen kings ruled the Northern Kingdom of Israel during its approximate 210-year history as a divided Kingdom. Not one of these kings was a true worshiper of God. During the 30 years prior to its fall, the Northern Kingdom was controlled by the fierce Assyrians and was paying heavy tribute to remain in existence. Hoshea murdered King Pekah, to become the 19th and last king of Israel (2 Kings 15:30).

In the sixth year of Hoshea's reign, the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser died, and Shalmaneser succeeded him. Hoshea decided that this change of leadership provided the opportunity for him to declare Israel's independence and to withhold the annual tribute he owed to Assyria. Hoshea had expected military support from Egypt which he did not receive. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the Assyrian Shalmaneser and his army began the siege of Samaria that lasted three years before Samaria and the Northern Kingdom were defeated. Hoshea was taken to Assyria and *bound in prison* (17:4-6). Most of the Israelites were relocated throughout the Assyrian Empire, while captives from other nations were brought to Samaria. These pagans intermarried with the remaining poorer class of Israelites. Because of this, they became known as Samaritans and were despised by the pure-blooded Jews.

Chapters 18-25 are devoted to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The smaller Southern Kingdom of Judah continued for about 135 years longer for a total of about 480 years, including the 120 years of the United Kingdom. Judah also had 19 kings (chapters 18-25). Queen Athaliah, a usurper of the throne, and Gedaliah, who was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar as governor but was assassinated only two months later, are not included as legitimate rulers of the Southern Kingdom (11:1-16; 25:8-9,22-25).

By the last chapter, Jerusalem had been destroyed and Solomon's Temple burned. Most of the population had been taken captive and transplanted throughout the land of Babylonia. The poorer people had been allowed to remain in Israel but soon fled to Egypt, forcing the prophet Jeremiah to go with them (Jer 43:2-7). The apostasy and idol worship first introduced by Solomon continued to corrupt the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Consequently, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, became the instrument God

used to execute His judgment upon them for rejecting His Word as He had forewarned and promised (Deut 7:1-4).

By the end of the last chapter, we read that Jerusalem was destroyed and Solomon's temple burned by the Babylonians. Most of Judah's population was taken captive and dispersed throughout Babylonia.

✠ **Second Kings Outline**

(Continued from the outline of First Kings)

- I. The divided kingdom 1:1–17:41
 - A. The third dynasty 1:1–9:37
 1. The reign of Ahaziah in Israel 1:1–18
 2. The transition from Elijah to Elisha 2:1–25
 3. Elisha's ministry 3:1–8:15
 4. The reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah in Judah 8:16–29
 5. The anointing of Jehu and the massacre of Ahab's family 9:1–37
 - B. The fourth dynasty 10:1–15:12
 1. The reign of Jehu in Israel 10:1–36
 2. The reigns of Athaliah and Jehoash in Judah 11:1–12:21
 3. The reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoash in Israel 13:1–25
 4. The reign of Amaziah in Judah 14:1–22
 5. The reign of Jeroboam II in Israel 14:23–29
 6. The reign of Azariah in Judah 15:1–7
 7. The reign of Zechariah in Israel 15:8–12
 - C. The decline and fall of Israel 15:13–17:41
 1. The reigns of Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah in Israel 15:13–31
 2. The reigns of Jotham and Ahaz in Judah 15:32–16:20
 3. The reign of Hoshea and the fall of the northern kingdom 17:1–23
 4. The repopulation of Samaria 17:24–41
- II. The southern kingdom alone 18:1–25:30
 - A. The reign of Hezekiah 18:1–20:21
 - B. The reigns of Manasseh and Amon 21:1–26
 - C. The reign of Josiah 22:1–23:30
 - D. The last kings of Judah and the fall of Jerusalem 23:31–25:21
 1. The reign and captivity of Jehoahaz 23:31–34
 2. The reign of Jehoiakim 23:35–24:7
 3. The reign and captivity of Jehoiachin 24:8–16
 4. The reign of Zedekiah 24:17–20
 5. The fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah 25:1–21
 - E. Two historical appendices 25:22–30
 1. Gedaliah made governor of Judah 25:22–26

✠ **The Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of Second Kings**

- Elisha as a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Elisha had the gift of prophecy and our Lord Jesus Christ was called the Prophet from Nazareth of Galilee (Mt 21:11)

- Both had chosen disciples
- Elisha took care of the sons of the prophets (the ministers of God's word) and our Lord took care of His disciples
- Both performed supernatural miracles like the rising up of dead, the healing of lepers and blessing of the few

✦ The Holy Book of First Chronicles

✦ Title and Authorship:

The Hebrew title means “The Events of the Days” like a journal. First and Second Chronicles were originally a simple continuous Hebrew work that was divided as a matter of convenience by the Greek Old Testament translators of the *Septuagint* (LXX). The name “Chronicles” was given by Jerome in his Latin Vulgate Bible (A.D. 385-405). He called it “Chronicles of the Entire Sacred History.”

The author is not stated in the books of Chronicles. According to Jewish Talmud, Ezra wrote “his book and Chronicles—the order of all generations down to himself.” The author is called “The Chronicler” suggesting he was a historian and possibly a scribe, priest or Levite. He had access to temple archives and government records. Internal evidence also suggests the author may have also written the books of Ezra and Nehemiah because the language, literary style of all three works are similar. The first three verses of Ezra (1:1-3) are almost the same as the last two verses of 2 Chronicles (36:22, 23). In the Hebrew Bible, Ezra-Nehemiah is considered one book with Chronicles at the very end of the Hebrew Bible. Probably the best estimate for the date of writing of Chronicles is around 400 B.C.

✦ Historical Background:

The books of 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings cover about the same period in history as the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles. 1 & 2 Kings primarily focus on the political history of Israel and Judah, while 1 & 2 Chronicles primarily present the religious history of Judah, Jerusalem, and the Temple as it relates to the Davidic covenant. Consequently, the history of the ten apostate northern tribes is of little significance in 1 & 2 Chronicles.

Chronicles concentrates on King David and his successors in the land of Judah with only selected comments about the Northern Kingdom as it relates to the South. It is an interpretation of the history of Israel from a special religious point of view as it relates to the Covenant and the temple.

The theme in Chronicles is the Jewish temple in Jerusalem with its worship, officials, the Levites, and the uniqueness of Yahweh (2 Chron. 2:5; 6:5; 20:6-7; 1 Chron. 17:21). And if the temple is the central theme, then worship of God is the dominant attitude in the books. God is worthy of our praise and adoration.

The key to the history of Israel is God’s covenant with David who was chosen of God to plan and prepare for the building of the temple by collecting money and supplies. The author brings together all the prominent facts regarding the temple and its central importance to God’s sovereign rule of the nation to accomplish His eternal purpose of redemption.

David is mentioned over 250 times in Chronicles and Jerusalem almost 250 times and Judah 225 times. It was God's chosen place (2 Chron. 5-6), not Samaria in the North. There is no mention of the Northern Kingdom except as it relates to the temple and its purpose in the nation (2 Chron. 10:19; 13:5). God met with His chosen people in the temple above the Mercy Seat (2 Chron. 6:19-7:3). A sub-theme is the great sovereign power of God to accomplish His purposes with His people (1 Chron. 29:11-12). There is no other God like Yahweh (1 Chron. 16:25-26; 17:20; 2 Chron. 6:14). The kings of the Northern Kingdom are almost completely left out because they rejected the temple worship in Jerusalem.

✠ Introduction to First Chronicles

First Chronicles opens with the longest list of names in the Bible and covers approximately 3,500 years of genealogical history (chapters 1-9). The second chapter of 1 Chronicles is devoted to the descendants of the tribe of Judah, who were given this prominence because the promised Messiah would descend from this tribe (Gen 49:8-12). This long genealogy is indispensable for tracing the family line through which God would carry out His eternal plan of redemption. The record begins with Adam (1 Chron 1:1); narrows to Abraham, Isaac, and his descendants through Jacob, then Judah; and on to David, through whom the Messiah would come. These families are the vital links connecting the legal genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ through Joseph, who was his legal, but not his biological, father (Mat 1:1-17; 2 Sam 7:12-13; Ps 89:3-4; 132:11; Isai 11:1; Jer 23:5). The rightful Heir to the throne of David is the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ, born through the virgin Mary, as recorded in Luke 2:7,11; 3:23-38. The Messianic lineage passed from David to Nathan, Solomon's brother. The line of Solomon was eliminated because of Jeconiah, as confirmed by Jeremiah (2 Sam 5:14; 1 Chron 3:5; 14:4; Luke 3:31).

The genealogies point out that the promises to David were founded on God's ancient promises to the patriarchs. God had pledged to Abraham that He would make him the father of a great nation, one through which He would bless the whole earth (Gen. 12:1-3). God had also promised that a king would rule over this special nation (Gen. 17:6). It was revealed to Jacob that the king would descend specifically from Jacob's son Judah (Gen. 49:10). Finally, the genealogy in the Book of Ruth explains the link between the promise and the fulfillment by tracing the line of Judah through his son Perez to King David (Ruth 4:18-22). God had faithfully fulfilled His promise.

While Abraham and David were both ancestors of Joseph and Mary, the legal lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah is recorded through Joseph in Matthew and the blood lineage is recorded separately through Mary in Luke.

Saul's last battle and death are mentioned in chapter ten of 1 Chronicles. Chapters 11-29 cover the 40-year reign of David and his death. Since the chronicler wanted to encourage the returning Israelites, he focused on the glories of David's reign—his conquest of Jerusalem (11:4-9), his heroic soldiers (11:10-47), his victories over the Philistines (18:1-12), and his celebration when bringing the ark to Jerusalem (15:25-29).

At a time when the Israelites were rebuilding the nation and the temple (Ezra 3:7–13), the chronicler painted a picture of David’s kingdom as a kingdom founded on the true worship of God. Not the throne, but the tabernacle and temple were the focus of David’s kingdom. Chronicles extensively describes how David moved the Ark of the Covenant to a suitable place of worship (13:1–16:3), appointed appropriate religious personnel (16:4–6, 37–43; 23:1–26:32), and made plans for building a permanent temple (chs. 22; 28; 29). The theme of Chronicles is that God Himself established David’s kingdom (29:10, 11) in fulfillment of His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through the Davidic covenant, David’s kingdom itself embodies the promise of the future kingdom whose ruler is the great Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ.

✦ Purpose of the Book:

- To encourage the downhearted and discouraged workers who had returned to Jerusalem after the exile with Zerubbabel to repair the wall of Jerusalem and begin work on rebuilding the temple.
- The building and rebuilding of the temple of Yahweh. God’s dealings with Israel, Judah and David all relate to that central purpose. The master passion of David was to build the temple, but God denied him that privilege because he was a man of war so his son Solomon became the builder instead (1 Chron. 22:8).
- The emphasis on the covenant of David would demonstrate the continuity between preexilic and postexilic history of Israel.

✦ First Chronicles Outline

- I. The genealogies 1:1–9:44
 - A. The patriarchal genealogies 1:1–54
 - B. The genealogy of Judah 2:1–4:23
 - C. The genealogy of Simeon 4:24–43
 - D. The genealogy of Reuben 5:1–10
 - E. The genealogy of Gad 5:11–17
 - F. The Hagrite campaign 5:18–22
 - G. The genealogy of the half tribe of Manasseh 5:23–26
 - H. The genealogy of Levi 6:1–81
 - I. The genealogy of Issachar 7:1–5
 - J. The genealogy of Benjamin 7:6–12
 - K. The genealogy of Naphtali 7:13
 - L. The genealogy of Manasseh 7:14–19
 - M. The genealogy of Ephraim 7:20–29
 - N. The genealogy of Asher 7:30–40
 - O. The genealogy of Benjamin 8:1–40
 - P. The settlers of Jerusalem 9:1–34
 - Q. The genealogy of Saul 9:35–44
- II. The rise of David 10:1–22:1
 - A. The death of Saul 10:1–14
 - B. The succession of David 11:1–12:40
 - C. The transfer of the ark 13:1–14

- D. The establishment of David's rule 14:1–17
- E. The arrival and installation of the ark 15:1–16:43
- F. God's covenant with David 17:1–27
- G. David's international relations 18:1–20:8
- H. David's census and its aftermath 21:1–22:1
 - I. The preparations for succession 22:2–29:30
 - 1. David's preparation for building the temple 22:2–19
 - 2. David's preparation of religious and political personnel 23:1–27:34
 - 3. David's great assembly 28:1–29:22
 - 4. The succession of Solomon 29:22–30

✠ The Holy Book of Second Chronicles

✠ Introduction to Second Chronicles

The details of the history of Israel and Judah in Second Chronicles communicate the great message of redemption—particularly God’s blessing on David and his successors. First Chronicles focuses on the Davidic covenant during David’s time, and Second Chronicles continues that theme in the period after David’s death. Even though Second Chronicles relates the experiences of Solomon and his successors, it continues to emphasize God’s promise of an everlasting dynasty to David. Successors to David came and went. Some were true to the requirements of that covenant—they “walked in the former ways of their father David” (17:3)—and others were not. But God’s commitment to the household of David continued throughout, even after the exile to Babylon.

Because of this emphasis on covenant, Second Chronicles makes frequent mention of priests, Levites, the temple, and other elements of Israel’s religious life. It tells how Solomon’s temple was built and furnished (2:1–8:16) and includes a thorough description of the temple and its ministry (20:5–13, 24–30; 23:12–21; 24:4–14; 29:2–31:21; 34:2–35:19).

Second Chronicles devotes more attention to Judah than to Israel since it is centered on the Davidic covenant. Ever since the division into southern and northern kingdoms (10:16–19), Judah had become the inheritors of God’s promises to David. Though David’s successors ruled only the smaller kingdom of Judah, God had remained faithful to His unconditional covenant with David. Judah was the nucleus through which God would accomplish His work of redemption.

Second Chronicles continues the history of the Davidic line, beginning with the reign of Solomon. It records the division of the kingdom, and covers the history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah until the exile of the people to Babylon in 586 B.C. Its last verses contain the Persian King Cyrus’ proclamation which encouraged the Jews to return to Jerusalem, as had been foretold by Jeremiah (2 Chron 36:22-23; Jer 29:10-14).

The first seven chapters of 2Chronicles tell of building the Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem after the pattern of the Tabernacle (chapters 1-4). The Temple was completed and dedicated to God in the 11th year of Solomon’s reign (chapter 5; compare I Kings 6:38). The remainder of 2Chronicles records the moral and spiritual decline as a result of Solomon’s willful sins (I Kings 11:9-11), which led to the division of the kingdom. It ends with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon’s Temple (2 Chron 10 - 36).

✠ Purpose of the Book

- To show how important the temple is in the life of the nation and its people. The temple, like the old tabernacle, was the place where the God of the Covenant met with His chosen people. This truth was central to the life of the nation.

- To recount the history in such a way as to assure the people that God was ruling and to urge them on to full loyalty to Him
- To preach the word of hope: belief in the Lord and the message of His prophets that God would restore to Judah a period of glory similar to the nation's golden age (2 Chron. 20:20)

✦ Second Chronicles Outline

- I. The reign of Solomon 1:1–9:31
 - A. Solomon's inauguration 1:1–17
 - B. Solomon's temple 2:1–7:22
 - C. Solomon's kingdom 8:1–9:31
- II. The kingdom of Judah 10:1–36:23
 - A. The division of the kingdom 10:1–11:23
 - B. The rulers of Judah 12:1–36:16
 1. Rehoboam 12:1–16
 2. Abijah 13:1–22
 3. Asa 14:1–16:14
 4. Jehoshaphat 17:1–20:37
 5. Jehoram 21:1–20
 6. Ahaziah 22:1–9
 7. Athaliah 22:10–23:21
 8. Joash 24:1–27
 9. Amaziah 25:1–28
 10. Uzziah (Azariah) 26:1–23
 11. Jotham 27:1–9
 12. Ahaz 28:1–27
 13. Hezekiah 29:1–32:33
 14. Manasseh 33:1–20
 15. Amon 33:21–25
 16. Josiah 34:1–35:27
 17. Jehoahaz 36:1–4
 18. Jehoiakim 36:5–8
 19. Jehoiachin 36:9, 10
 20. Zedekiah 36:11–14
 - C. The Exile 36:15–23

✦ The Holy Book of Ezra

✦ Title and Authorship

This book is named after the person who appears in chapters 7-10 of the book. Both the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the Greek Septuagint use Ezra (or Esdras) for the title. Ezra and Nehemiah were actually one book in the ancient Hebrew and Greek Old Testament. Each book contains materials found in the other (e.g., the list in Ezra 2 is also in Neh. 7). Each book completes the other; Ezra's story is continued in Nehemiah (chs. 8-10). Both are necessary to the history of Israel. A whole century would be unknown (538-432 B.C.), historically, apart from Ezra and Nehemiah. They are the next chapter of the history recorded in Chronicles.

Jewish tradition attributed this book to Ezra. From Ezra 7:28 to 8:34 and again in chapter 9, Ezra speaks in the first person, much as Luke does in certain portions of the book of Acts. Ezra is described as a scribe in Ezra 7:21, so he would have had ample ability to write this book.

✦ Historical Background

This book spans 92 years of Jewish history from the decree of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to the land (539 B.C.) to the decree of Artaxerxes which halted the work of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem (446 B.C.).

Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther all deal with the story of Israel following the Babylonian Captivity. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon did not long outlive that king. It was soon replaced by the empire of the Persians. King Cyrus of Persia conquered the Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C..

The Persians had a different method of maintaining their empire. They determined that a happy and prosperous people made better taxpayers, so they permitted dispossessed peoples to return to their homelands. Under the Persian rule, there were three specific returns of Jews to the land of Judah.

The first was led by Zerubbabel and involved an initial rebuilding of Jerusalem. The second was led by Ezra who oversaw the rebuilding of the Temple and the reinstatement of the sacrifices.

The third was led by Nehemiah and involved the rebuilding of the defensive walls of Jerusalem.

The Book of Ezra begins with the history of the Jews from the time when Cyrus of Persia released them from Babylonian exile. They were permitted to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who was appointed governor by King Cyrus (Ezra 5:14; Haggai 1:1, 14; 2:2,21). Zerubbabel was also called by the Persian name *Sheshbazzar*, *the prince of Judah* (Ezra 1:8).

Most of the older generation of Israelites who had been taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar had died. The majority of the new generation of Jews had grown up in Babylon and had no interest in returning to a homeland they had never seen. Ezra records that the first expedition was made up of 42,360 Jews and 7,337 of their servants (2:64-65).

The original Temple, built by King Solomon, had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. After arriving in Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, the returned exiles built an altar and observed the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) which commemorates the Israelites' 40 years in the wilderness under Moses. Ezra records that, *in the second year of their coming to the House of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel . . . to set forward the work of the House of the Lord* (3:8; 5:16). It took about two years to complete the foundation of the Temple, after which, the work ceased because of opposition from adversaries.

About 15 years later, stirred by the preaching of the Word of God by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah as recorded in their respective books, the Jews once again *began to build the House of God* (5:2). This time they completed it in about five years, despite intense opposition (chapters 5, 6). Between chapters 6 and 7 there is an interval of about 60 years during which Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Zechariah died. The events in the Book of Esther probably took place during that time.

About 78 years after Zerubbabel's expedition (7:1-10:44), *in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king*, Ezra, a descendant of Aaron the first High Priest, received a letter of authority from the king to lead another expedition to Jerusalem, *according to the Law of your God. . . . Whatsoever is commanded . . . let it be diligently done* (7:7,11-14,23). At that time, Ezra led about 1,800 men plus women and children, totaling about 5,000 people, from the Persian capital of Babylon to Jerusalem (7:28 -- 8:31).

✚ Purpose of the Book

- To show God's faithfulness and the way he kept his promise to restore His people to their land
- To reveal how God controls the destiny of all mankind as shown by the decrees, proclamations, and genealogies in the book

✚ Ezra Outline

- I. The return of the first group of exiles and the rebuilding 1:1–6:22
 - A. The return of the first group of exiles 1:1–2:70
 1. The decree of Cyrus 1:1–11
 2. The census of the returnees 2:1–70
 - B. The rebuilding of the temple 3:1–6:22
 1. The commencement of the rebuilding 3:1–13
 2. The cessation of the rebuilding 4:1–24

3. The resumption of the rebuilding 5:1–17
4. The completion of the rebuilding 6:1–22
- II. The return of the second group of exiles and Ezra's reforms 7:1–10:44
 - A. The return of the second group of exiles 7:1–8:36
 1. The decree of Artaxerxes 7:1–28
 2. The return of Ezra 8:1–36
 - B. The dissolution of the Israelites' mixed marriages 9:1–10:44
 1. The confession of Ezra 9:1–15
 2. Ezra's confrontation of the people 10:1–44

✠ The Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of Ezra

- Zerubbabel was a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Zerubbabel who had the legitimate right to the throne of Judah was chosen to save the exiled and become governor for the returning Jews. God the Father chose His Only begotten Son to save the repented sinners and He gave Him the throne of David
- Zerubbabel transferred the people of God from the land of slavery and exile to Jerusalem (Ezra 21:2) and Our Lord Jesus Christ transferred us from slavery to the age of grace and adoption to live with Him in heavenly Jerusalem
- Zerubbabel put the foundation for the temple (Ezra 3:10; 5:2) and our Lord Jesus Christ founded the church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it (Mt 16:18)

✠ Ezra as a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ:

- Like Zerubbabel also Ezra transferred the people of God from the land of slavery and exile to Jerusalem (Ezra 21:2) and Our Lord Jesus Christ transferred us from slavery to the age of grace and adoption to live with Him in heavenly Jerusalem
- Ezra mourned over the sins of the people of Jerusalem (Ezra 9:5). Twice it is recorded that, when the Lord Jesus Christ looked upon Jerusalem, He also mourned for the people. *When He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it. . . . O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!* (Luke 19:41; 13:34).
- Ezra emphasized on writing the book of the law and taught it to the post-exile generation as our Lord Jesus Christ came to teach us the laws of the New Testament and free us from the devil

✦ The Holy Book of Nehemiah

✦ Title and Authorship

The book is named after his main character and his writer. The Name Nehemiah means ‘ God is consolation’ or ‘The Lord comforts’. Most Bible scholars agree that Nehemiah authored the book that bears his name. Much of the book is a first-person account of the circumstances surrounding his return to Jerusalem (chaps. 1-7; 12:31-13:31).

✦ Historical Background

The Book of Nehemiah is a continuation of the history recorded in the Book of Ezra. Nehemiah grew up in Persia among the Jews who had been captives in Babylon before Cyrus restored their freedom. Nehemiah was in an honored position as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, who was known as Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther. Nehemiah’s place was one of great trust and responsibility (I Kings 10:5; II Chronicles 9:4).

Nehemiah was heartbroken when he received a report of the spiritual and physical poverty that existed in Jerusalem. As Nehemiah shared his great concern, the Persian king appointed him governor of Judah and gave him the authority to rebuild the walls (Nehemiah 2:5-7; 5:14).

Nehemiah came to Jerusalem about 100 years after Zerubbabel had left Persia and arrived in Jerusalem with the first group of returnees. Fourteen years before Nehemiah, Ezra had gone to Jerusalem with 5,000 Jews to restore true worship of God in the Temple (Ezra 7:6-7). Nehemiah led the third expedition to leave Persia for Jerusalem. Following the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the Temple, attempts to stop the work were successful during the reigns of both Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes (4:6-7,21). When the prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the rebuilding to begin again, King Darius issued the second decree, allowing the work to continue.

The walls had remained in ruins since Nebuchadnezzar completely destroyed Jerusalem about 140 years before (II Kings 25:8-11). The Jewish remnant was not prospering because they had no protection against surrounding nations who could easily come in and rob them of their harvests and other possessions. Restoring the broken-down walls which had once protected Jerusalem from its enemies became Nehemiah’s major physical project. Ungodly Sanballat taunted and even plotted war, while nobles refused to work (Nehemiah 2: 19; 3:5; 4:1-12). Then a false prophet predicted Nehemiah’s death as enemies slandered him (4:12-23; 6:2-4,10-13). But, by continual prayer, fasting, and faith in the Word of God, Nehemiah led the people to complete the walls in only 52 days (6:15).

There was great emphasis placed upon hearing the Word of God, as well as understanding it, which led to a revival among the people (see 8:2-3, 7-8,12).

After the walls of Jerusalem were dedicated by Ezra and Nehemiah (12: 27-43), Nehemiah continued in Jerusalem as governor of Judah for about 12 years (5:14). He then returned to the Persian court for an indefinite period of time. During Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem, the Word of God was once again disregarded and corruption and immorality gained acceptance (13:6). Nehemiah again obtained leave from the Persian king and returned to Jerusalem. With great fervor, he turned the nation from its sins, reestablished its covenant relationship with God, and restored the people to true worship of Him (13:7-31).

✚ Purpose of the Book

- To record the history of the third return to Jerusalem after captivity
- To emphasize covenant renewal in the restored community (e.g., Neh 8-10)
- To demonstrate God's faithfulness through the physical rebuilding and dedication of the wall
- To proclaim the legitimacy of the restored community's religious, political, economic, and social life as God's people (cf. Neh 9:32-37)
- To trace the re-establishment of God's worship and the securing of Jerusalem as a religious community separated from all foreign influences unto God's Law
- To foreshadow the full restoration of the nation through that which was accomplished by Ezra and Nehemiah

✚ Nehemiah Outline

- I. The rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls 1:1–6:19
 - A. The prayer of Nehemiah concerning Jerusalem 1:1–11
 - B. The planning of Nehemiah concerning Jerusalem 2:1–20
 - C. The work of Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem 3:1–32
 - D. Opposition to the rebuilding of the walls 4:1–23
 - E. The conflict of the Jewish people within Jerusalem 5:1–19
 - F. Renewed opposition to rebuilding of the walls 6:1–19
- II. The restoration of the Jewish community in Jerusalem 7:1–13:31
 - A. The registry of the people 7:1–73
 - B. Revival under Ezra 8:1–10:39
 - C. The repopulation of Jerusalem 11:1–12:26
 - D. The dedication of Jerusalem's walls 12:27–47
 - E. The restoration of the people 13:1–31

✚ The Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of Nehemiah

- Nehemiah as a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ
- He left his post in the king's palace preferring to build the walls of Jerusalem and our Lord Jesus Christ came down from His glory to build the walls of the Church

- Nehemiah put all his heart into doing the work of God as the Lord Jesus Christ came to do the work of the Father “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Lk 2:49)
- He chastesized those who did not follow the law as the Lord Jesus Christ chastesized the scribes and Pharisees
- He was considered as one who took the Jews to the New Covenant as the Lord Jesus Christ

✦ The Holy Book of Esther

✦ Title and Authorship

The book is named after the character "Esther". In Hebrew the title is *Esther* which may be derived from the Persian word for star, *stara*. In Greek the title is transliterated to *ESQHR*. Jewish authorities record the tradition that Mordecai was the author. Only general information can be gleaned from the book. He composed it sometime after the death of Xerxes (464 BC) because he refers to the king's biography, "written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia (10:2).

✦ Historical Background

Ruth and Esther are the only two books in the Bible named for women. Esther was a Hebrew woman who married a Gentile king. God used Esther in a strategic time in the history of Israel to help preserve the nation from destruction. Ruth, on the other hand, was a Gentile woman who married a Hebrew man. God used Ruth to perpetuate the line of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Book of Esther centers around the descendants of the Israelites who remained in Persia after the 70-year captivity and the Hebrew maiden Hadassah, who was given the Persian name Esther.

The events in this book probably took place in the time between chapters six and seven of the Book of Ezra, occurring about 40 years after the Temple had been rebuilt (Ezra 3:10; 5:14-15), and about 30 years before the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt (Nehemiah 6:15).

The Book of Esther, as well as the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, confirm that God can accomplish His will through a helpless minority of faithful servants, even when they are ruled by ungodly men (Jeremiah 32:27).

The Book tells the story of the plot of Haman the Agagite, jealous and powerful vizier of King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) of Persia (485-464 B.C.), to destroy in a single day all the Jews living in the Persian Empire.

Mordecai, a Jewish official in the court of the Persian King Xerxes (Ahasuerus), raises his niece Esther. Xerxes divorces his wife, Vashti, because she refuses to appear when summoned. He takes Esther from his harem and makes her queen in Vashti's stead. Mordecai overhears a plot against Xerxes, and he spoils it.

Mordecai refuses to bow to Haman, a Persian official, who is consequently enraged. Determined to wipe out the Jews, Haman persuades Xerxes to issue a decree that the Jews be destroyed. Mordecai asks Esther to intercede, but she says she can not go into the king's presence without being summoned. Mordecai reminds her that she too

is a Jew and will not survive, and that she does not cooperate deliverance will arise to the Jews from another place. Esther therefore agrees to go to the king without being summoned.

So Esther dresses nicely and stands in the king's inner court, for which he can have her killed; but instead, he holds out the golden scepter to her, allowing her to speak. She asks that the king and Haman both come to a banquet and hear her request.

Haman, glorying in his prominence, brags of being invited by the queen to the banquet, but he is still upset about Mordecai. His wife advises him to build a gallows and to ask the king if Mordecai may be hung on it.

That night, the king is reading his chronicles, and sees that Mordecai had disclosed the plot against the king's life. He determines to reward him, and just then Haman enters the court to ask the king if he can hang Mordecai. The king asks him: "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" Haman, thinking the king means him, suggests he be paraded on a horse and adorned with royal apparel. The king tells him to make haste and to do just that for Mordecai. So Haman must parade Mordecai.

At the banquet, Esther announces that her people have been sold to be killed by Haman. The king rises and leaves in anger. Haman falls upon Esther's bed to plead for his life. The king, happening upon Haman in this compromising position, and thinking he would rape Esther, determines to hang him. Ironically, Haman is hung on the very gallows he built for Mordecai. The king then sets Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Since the king can not reverse a decree, he allows Mordecai to write a new one, and gives him his ring to seal it. The new decree commands the Jews to be ready to defend themselves.

On the day Haman's decree is to be carried out, all of the rulers around help the Jews, "because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them." So the Jews prevail against their enemies.

The event is celebrated with feasting and great joy, and the memory of it is to be perpetuated by the annual observance of the feast of Purim (lots), when the lot of destruction for the Jews was reversed for one of deliverance and triumph by Queen Esther and her uncle Mordecai.

✚ Purpose of the Book

- To provide the historical background for the feast of Purim
- To emphasize the continuing, ongoing, religious significance of the Jewish people
- To encourage the Babylonian/Persian Jews and those who had returned to Palestine of God's providential ability and willingness to preserve them against their enemies

- To show how divine guidance overrules all things; even in a distant far country God's people are yet in His hands.

✠ Esther Outline

- I. A dethroned queen and a discovered queen 1:1–2:23
 - A. The grand banquet 1:1–9
 - B. Vashti's reluctance to expose herself to the drunken crowd 1:10–12
 - C. Vashti's demotion as the chief of wives 1:13–22
 - D. The search for a new queen 2:1–4
 - E. The discovery and approval of Esther 2:5–18
 - F. Mordecai's revelation of a plot 2:19–23
- II. Haman's schemes against the Jewish people in Persia 3:1–7:10
 - A. Haman's hatred of Mordecai 3:1–6
 - B. Haman's decree 3:7–15
 - C. Mordecai's reminder to Esther 4:1–17
 - D. Esther's two banquets 5:1–7:10
 1. The first banquet 5:1–8
 2. The scheme against Mordecai 5:9–14
 3. Mordecai's reward and Haman's humiliation 6:1–14
 4. The second banquet and Haman's hanging 7:1–10
- III. The deliverance of the Jewish people 8:1–9:32
 - A. A royal reversal 8:1–14
 - B. Rejoicing among the Jewish people 8:15–17
 - C. Two days of deliverance 9:1–17
 - D. The Feast of Purim 9:18–32
- IV. Mordecai's preeminence 10:1–3

✠ The Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of Esther

- Mordecai as a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Haman plotted against Mordecai and prepared gallows to hang him as the devil manipulated the Jews to crucify our Lord
- The gallows prepared for Mordecai caused Haman's destruction as our Lord's cross defeated Satan
- Mordecai won victory and sat at the right hand of the king as our Lord by the cross won victory over death and ascended into the heavens and is sitting at the right hand of His Father.

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