A gravel path winds through a lush green park with large trees. The path is the central focus, leading the eye from the bottom towards the top of the frame. The trees are dense and green, with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

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# God's Path Through the Bible

by Cyril R Dymke

Scripture Quotations are from The Authorised Version (King James Bible)

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First published     2005  
Revised             January 2007  
Second Revision   2009  
This edition        2011 Revised and edited by Cyril Dymke, and Tim and Leah Knowling

## A Note from the Author

To the Reader

Producing **'God's Path Through the Bible'** was an interesting challenge I could not resist. I perceived its need many years before starting during more recent times. The script came together after several months as inspiration recurred with constant persistence. That's how it all happened. The first copy came into being several years ago with various extras added here and there in later editions. Even now, I readily admit there is still ample room for improvement, because perfection will not be found in any man-made documents.

I advise you to first examine the index and after reading the introduction, give due attention to the PREFACE which explains why I decided to write this booklet.

Many will agree that a knowledge of Bible history sequence is highly desirable to appreciate God's great love and guidance as He directed the course of world history. Christian bookshops supply an extensive range of interesting and useful material for our guidance and this is commendable. Material embracing the entire Scripture may at times be too detailed for some readers and perhaps a bit heavy in some cases. I say this with all due respect for those who spend many years of study and research. Their work has been helpful to many people who study the various commentaries, so let us be grateful for their dedicated work.

I decided to compile a condensed overview of the Bible and hope this will assist newcomers and others with a genuine interest in Bible history and some of the basic teachings. I concentrated on our sin, God's love and justice and with Jesus as the central figure throughout all history. The Old Testament emphasises the promise and purpose of His coming, with the New Testament providing all evidence of this fulfilment when Jesus, true God from all eternity, became true man also, when born of Mary approximately 2,000 years ago.

I now ask you, as the owner of this booklet, to read, photocopy and distribute this material at your discretion if you feel it may assist someone. Master copies are available if that makes it easier for you. Any comments from you, or advice will be appreciated. I am only a phone call away!

With genuine and sincere greetings,

Cyril R Dymke



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# INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE AND ITS OBJECTIVE

The Bible was written during a period of over 1600 years up to 95-96 A.D. and is our only source of Divine Revelation. Its writers were inspired by God, who reveals Himself to us through His written word. Therefore, God is the author of this marvellous Book.

1. The Bible teaches how God created the world and all things above and below by the power of his Word. The Bible reveals God's plan of salvation through Jesus who He promised after Adam and Eve fell into sin which we all inherited from our first parents.
2. It is a dangerous practice to reject any part of God's Word when we find things hard to believe or do not like to hear! So often, the truth seems to hurt!
3. The Bible is history's most reliable authority. Throughout the ages and to this present day, dictators have attempted to destroy it. This book has been praised by many, but hated by others.
4. It has been burnt, banned, criticised, rejected and ignored, yet it has withstood all attempts to annihilate it.
5. No other book has been read and studied by so many people.
6. Despite its age, the Bible is still the world's best-seller with its translations into thousands of languages worldwide. This ancient book proclaims its message that is still up to date.
7. It gives infallible guidance relating to hundreds of controversial issues.
8. The Bible has also been misused and misquoted with its true meaning distorted to support man's mindset opinions. Scoffers enjoy their ridicule of this Book. Many people have set out to prove it as wrong but later became true believers in Jesus, our only Saviour. Man's puny knowledge cannot match the power of God's Word!
9. It teaches history, wisdom, behaviour, poetry and prophecy.
10. It teaches the highest moral code for everyone. This includes guiding principles for sound government.
11. It exposes the human weaknesses of its various heroes and leaders.
12. It emphasises our responsibility, but doesn't waste space harping on petty rights.
13. Children worldwide enjoy its interesting Bible history stories, yet these stories teach great depths of meaning for all ages, and especially for those in authority.
14. The Bible is a library of books that relate together in perfect harmony. So called contradictions vanish when verses are studied in proper context.
15. It is unequalled as a history reference; also prophecy and hope for the future.
16. In the Middle East area, and especially Palestine, archaeology and scientific scrutiny continually upholds the truth of Bible records.
17. The Bible teaches about our sin, God's justice, His love for all people and His fulfilled plan of salvation for full and free forgiveness for all sins, through faith in Jesus Christ alone, who carried our guilt when He was crucified.
18. The Bible teaches the true meaning and purpose of our life but also warns against sinful pride, arrogance, hypocrisy and the abuse of God's grace and providence. Its precious gems of wisdom offer help and comfort those in distress. The words "Fear not" and "Peace be unto you" appear many times throughout the Bible.
19. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the central figure throughout all history and He is the **ONLY WAY** to salvation and everlasting life in God's Heavenly Kingdom.
20. Whether the Bible is new to you or not, I hope the following overview will guide you into further study and help you gain a deeper understanding of this precious Word from our Almighty God.



# PREFACE

I have written the following pages to assist those with little or no knowledge of the Bible and to help others become more acquainted with its contents. Many people start reading their Bibles with good intentions but after a time so often lose their way. The necessary detail and overlapping found in both the Old and New Testaments sometimes confuses readers. Those needing directions to any earthly destination must first be told where the journey begins and ends and be alerted to road signs and landmarks in between. This same rule can also apply to outline God's path through the Bible history.

One of the most difficult tasks during this exercise was to decide what to leave out, because everything in the Bible is important. I make no attempt to include every single incident recorded in Scripture, (stories could be written on each one) but instead suggested various places to read and fill in the gaps between the highlighted historical landmarks mentioned. This will encourage readers to search and concentrate on other areas of special interest. This is not meant to be a theological essay but rather to show how God guided history throughout the ages. When studied in proper context, God's Word gives clear direction **and is free from grey areas**, which people so often create to confuse and dominate over others. This booklet comprises three main parts.

## **The Old Testament**

## **The New Testament**

**The Summary** - This fills some gaps deliberately omitted because I chose to give due importance to Bible history sequence first, because each event leads to the next.

It is absolutely essential to believe that Jesus is the central figure throughout all history. The Old Testament proclaimed His coming as our Saviour at the appointed time. Already after sin came into the world, His cross appeared on the distant horizon and its shadow fell across the Garden of Eden. This happened when in great love God promised our Saviour who came many centuries later as spoken of in Genesis 3:15. This promise sealed the devil's fate forever and identified the beginning of many countdowns marked by many Old Testament historical landmarks. These directed people's attention to the coming of Jesus who was born at Bethlehem approximately 2000 years ago. The New Testament confirms the long awaited climax when Jesus made full and free atonement for all sins and assurance of everlasting life in God's heavenly kingdom. Unfortunately many reject this offer of God's great mercy and will be lost in everlasting damnation in hell. The Bible emphasises our sin, the need for true repentance, God's justice, and love for all people, through His plan of salvation fulfilled by Jesus.

The Bible records stories relating to people from all walks of life with lessons applicable to all ages. There are examples of those with great faith in God, but also people who showed utter contempt for Him.

The reference maps are for guidance only. Other Bible maps are available with more details showing various nations and cities. The course of Bible history is closely related to the rise and fall of nearby kingdoms and conquests in the Middle East region. I have made reference to these where applicable but enlarging on this is a separate and complex study on its own.



# **PART 1 The Old Testament.**

These five important details direct us to other vital Biblical landmarks.

1. God created heaven and earth through the power of His Word, and made man without sin.
2. Man fell into sin and this resulted in bodily and spiritual death.
3. God promised our Saviour to redeem mankind from the bondage of sin and Satan.
4. God's promise was fulfilled when Jesus was born in Bethlehem approximately 2000 years ago.
5. God formed His servant nation Israel whose people were chosen to be the bearers of His Word; and the people from whom Jesus was born to be the only Saviour of the world.

Other vital details could certainly be added to this list, and many of these will be given due attention during the following pages.

## **1. What is the Bible?**

Our Bible is God's inspired Word and free from error. It explains God's plan and purpose for our human race by directing us to our only Saviour Jesus Christ who redeemed us from the bondage of sin and Satan's power and everlasting damnation in hell. God's Word is clear and easy to understand when studied in proper context. Unfortunately, man's so called wisdom and higher Bible critics continually challenge its infallible truths and make it appear confusing and complicated, thus leading many people astray.

## **2. Bible history is related to the Middle East area. Map 1.**

Bible history is related to the Middle East area which is so much in today's news, and where world history began. Israel, also known as Palestine, situated on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea, occupies much of Bible history. This is where God's servant Israel people dwelt for many centuries until their exile, and also where Jesus worked during His three year ministry. The names of various nations such as Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Edom, Persia and others are seen in Scripture. References to Israel appear nearly 3,000 times!

## **3. Suggestions for starting.**

It is always helpful to accept guidance from those who regularly study the Bible to receive their guidance from God's Book of precious gems. The Psalms and the book of Proverbs offer comfort and advice so freely available to all. I truly support those who suggest beginning by reading the first four books in The New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These record the life of Jesus and the purpose of His ministry and fulfilment of God's promise of our Saviour. With all this in mind, these following pages were written to define God's path through a turbulent world history resulting from man's fall into sin. I sincerely hope this booklet will assist you to see how God guided history to the great climax when Jesus, who was born to be our Saviour, atoned for all our sins.

## **4. Genesis is the foundation of Holy Scripture.**

Genesis is the foundation of Holy Scripture and does not contain any fiction, folklore or legend as often claimed by our treacherous higher critics of the Bible. When Jesus came to fulfil His mission on earth 4,000 years after creation, He often referred to names, places and past events in Genesis also and would have quickly corrected any mistakes found there. It so happened there were none! Surely that settles all challenges to Genesis or any other Old Testament Scriptures.

## 5. The Bible is inspired by God.

The Bible is a product of God's mind and was written by men divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit over a period of approximately 1,600 years, beginning around 1,400 B.C. The first five books of the Old Testament are accredited to Moses. The rest were written by various prophets and others who proclaimed God's Word during the Old Testament era of 4,000 years, thus making a total of 39 books. The 27 New Testament books were written by some of Christ's chosen disciples, and also St Paul during the early New Testament era which marked the time of Jesus 2,000 years ago. This makes a total of 66 books in the Bible.

The Bible texts, 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 give ample proof that all Scripture writers were aware of being mere instruments inspired by the Holy Spirit to write what God required to be recorded. The following texts prove that all Scripture is God's Word: Luke 11:28, John 5:39 and 1 Corinthians 2:13. This was God's safeguard to prevent errors caused by mere human opinions creeping in during the period of 1,600 years when the Scriptures were written. Therefore, the Bible is God's infallible Word to be believed and trusted.

## 6. The Bible account of God's creation.

We read from Genesis 1:1-5 that in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth by the command of His Word, and out of nothing! (Psalm 33:6 and Hebrews 11:3). His entire creation was completed in six days (Genesis 1:31 and Exodus 20:11). God also created everything in the world, including all living creatures and plants. He commanded these to be fruitful and reproduce after their kind, (see section 66). Genesis 1:27-29 reveals the purpose and fulfilment of His creation agenda when He made man in His own image on the sixth day. Genesis 2:7 states how God made Adam from the dust of the ground. Verses 21 and 23 described how God made Eve.

Being created in God's image and without sin did not imply equality with God, but they were made to enjoy a special affinity with God. He bestowed upon humans the special gift of rational thinking not given to other living creatures over which man was given dominion. Most precious of all, God gave each human an immortal soul. Genesis 1:31 marks the completion of God's creation on the sixth day. He blessed and sanctified the seventh day when He rested after completing His creation, Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:1-3 and Exodus 31:17.

## 7. Sin enters the world and God's promise of our Saviour.

From the beginning, God's enemy Satan, the father of lies, still conspires to desecrate God's creation and Genesis 3:1 records his deceptive backhand tactics used to bring the sin of disobedience upon our first parents Adam and Eve, and all future generations. We view this in context with all Scripture.

- a. God first warned Adam not to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- b. Clearly this warning was conveyed to Eve who knew about this when tempted as stated in Genesis 3:2-3.
- c. She was deceived through the 'serpent's temptation and ate the fruit which she gave to Adam who listened to Eve and ate it instead of being obedient to God's command not to eat this fruit. We notice how the devil used the disguise of the serpent for his act of deception.
- d. The devil conspired to corrupt Adam through an act of disobedience to God, and used a cunning backhand method to deceive Eve first. In Romans 5:12-19 Adam is blamed for sin coming into the world because he hearkened to the voice of his wife, Genesis 3:17 and disobeyed God's warning in Genesis 2:17. Many centuries later, St Paul emphasises this in 1 Corinthians 15:22 (KJV) where He states, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (Now back to Genesis 3:15 where God's promise of our Saviour is given to Adam and Eve in symbolic language and easily understood in context with all Scripture. Here God promised to use the '**seed**' of the woman in His plans to bring about the birth of our Saviour Jesus who was already true God from all eternity. He became true man also when born of Mary who was already chosen for this purpose. She



conceived through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit when she lived 4,000 years later. This is clearly written in Matthew 1:17-25 with the name Jesus: meaning He shall save His people from their sins.

- e. The name of Jesus first appears in Matthew 1:1. Various Old Testament writers referred to the coming Saviour as Shiloh, Immanuel, the Light, the Redeemer and Messiah. God's selected family '**seed-line**' promise in Genesis 3:15 embodies the saving Gospel message of salvation fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The vital importance of this will be explained as we proceed along the path. We call this God's Messianic promise. In section 31, I will list several of many names recorded in this family '**seed-line**' starting from Adam and Eve to the birth of Jesus around 4,000 years later at approximately 4 BC.

## 8. Cain the first born murders his brother Abel.

In Genesis 4 we read that Cain the firstborn to Adam and Eve is the first recorded murderer and killed his brother Abel. This incident marked the beginning of future hatred, violence and bloodshed. Cain's unbelief and lack of faith displeased God. (Hebrews 11:4). Cain's jealousy and anger caused this bloodshed. Verses 13-15 say there were other people populating the area when this happened, so it seems safe to suggest that these two brothers would have been adults by this time. Chapter 4 completes the story about Cain.

## 9. The Great Flood.

Genesis chapters 5 and 6 records how human population increased during the following centuries with people rejecting God when violence and evil prevailed worldwide. Genesis chapters 6 and 7 relate the Great flood account. This judgment came to pass about 1,650 years after creation, around 2,350 B.C. God's warnings about this impending disaster were given 120 years beforehand, Genesis 6:3. God commanded Noah to build the ark [a special ship] to save his family from the flood. When the time came, the only people on board were Noah and his wife, their three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth together with their wives. It is important to remember that Noah was a descendant in the family '**seed-line**' from Adam and Eve to Jesus who God promised centuries earlier in Genesis 3:15. God was committed to keep His promise. Shem continued on from his father as a descendant in this family '**seed-line**'.

## 10. The tower of Babel and the confounding of languages.

After the flood God blessed Noah and his three sons, and told them to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 9:1). Chapters 10 and 11 record only the selected names of descendants from Noah's sons Japheth, Ham and Shem. The population grew but as time passed people once again drifted away from God. Worship of false gods and pride motivated future generations to build a city and a huge tower and make themselves a great name **lest they be scattered abroad**. The site was located on the plains of Shinar between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (*See Map 1*). God saw it all and allowed them to proceed for a time and enjoy their sinful ambitions to become so great. He knew man's imagination was the only limit to whatever they attempted to achieve and needed to be restrained. Genesis 11:1-9 records how during that era, all people spoke the same language. At the appropriate moment, God scuttled the unfinished project by confounding the language so people could not understand each other! **Then they were scattered abroad!** The tower was called Babel for those reasons (Genesis 11:9).

## 11. God calls Abraham who obeys by faith.

With the tower of Babel episode behind us after many years, we arrive at an important and interesting new era in history starting nearly 2,000 years after creation, or around 2,000 years before the birth of

Christ. The story begins with God's call to Abram, (whose name He later changed to Abraham, meaning the father of many nations) and descendants from his **seed**. God had already chosen Abraham before bringing him out from Ur of the Chaldees, part of modern Iraq and near the head of the Persian Gulf (Nehemiah 9:7). (See map 1). Together with his wife, Sarai (Sarah), his father, Terah and nephew, Lot, he journeyed north-west to Haran 600 miles (1000 km's) away and lived there until after his father died.

When Abraham was 75 years old, God called him to leave Haran and travel to a land still to be shown him (Genesis 12:1). By faith, Abraham obeyed, taking Sarah and Lot with their earthly belongings and travelled to this unknown destination (Hebrews 11:8). God had guided him to Canaan 300 miles (180 km's) to the south. This was the land of promise to be possessed by God's servant people Israel centuries later and occupies much of Bible history as I stated in section 2. (See map 2).

## 12. God's Promise to Abraham.

God's promise to Abraham marked the beginning of a new era in His plans to guide the course of history. He chose Abraham as the forefather of His servant people Israel who were to become the carriers of His Holy Word and **bearers of the family 'seed-line'** promised in Genesis 3:15. Abraham was born into this family line nine generations after Shem, who was mentioned in section 9. The importance of this **'seed-line'** was explained in section 7 (e). It may help to read that section again.

God revealed Himself as true God to Abraham whose ancestors had worshipped false gods as recorded in Joshua 24:2, and bestowed His gift of faith upon Abraham (Hebrews 11:8-19). In Genesis 12:1-19, God promised to make of him a great nation through whom all nations of the world would be blessed, and he would be the father of many nations and descendants. Note the **'seed-line'** emphasis again in verse 7. God's promise of many descendants was a test of faith for both Abraham and Sarah because she was childless and already beyond the child bearing age, as stated in Genesis 18:11. As God promised, Isaac was born to them at His appointed time when Abraham was 100 years of age, and Sarah aged 90 years (Genesis 21:1-8). Years later Isaac married Rebekah who gave birth to Jacob (Genesis 25:26), and whose name God later changed to Israel. This was the national name of God's servant nation and people, Israel, hundreds of years later during history. Abraham's role is respectfully acknowledged among the Old Testament patriarchs, and his name appears over 300 times during Scripture. God rescued him from the field of paganism to become the father of His servant people from whom Jesus was born.

## 13. Jacob and his twelve sons.

Jacob and his twelve sons lived in Canaan; later known as Israel, the same area promised to his grandfather Abraham years earlier. (See Map 2). The Israelite people were also called Hebrews, a name derived from Eber (Heber), a forefather of Jacob's grandfather, Abraham. More will be explained about this in section 68. Jacob's twelve sons are named here in order of birth: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin.

## 14. The life of Joseph.

Joseph was the second youngest son of Jacob, and the fascinating account of his life is recorded from the beginning of Genesis chapter 37 to the end of chapter 50. God used this young man to fulfil a crucial role during the history of Israel and his life story is worthy of careful reading. Joseph was a well behaved son in contrast to his ten older brothers who often caused their father much grief. At the age of seventeen, Joseph was sold by his older brothers to merchants travelling through to Egypt where he was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh the ruler of Egypt. Their action was motivated by jealous hatred for Joseph. Sometimes he had reported their evil deeds to their father resulting in their greater hatred for Joseph. I cannot agree with some Bible students who often regard Joseph as a spoilt child. He was a joy to his father because of his good conduct and response to discipline. Throughout his life in Egypt, Joseph proved to be a man of integrity and obedience to God. A spoilt lad would have conducted himself in a different manner.

The story of Joseph shows how God can cause man's evil intentions to turn events into good. Years later these same brothers took their families and father Jacob to Egypt where they lived as the result of a seven year drought. Here they were reunited and forgiven by Joseph who provided them with food and property in Egypt where they lived in plenty thereafter. In this remarkable story we observe both the worst and best of human emotions. After the death in Egypt of Jacob and his entire family, the Israel descendants lived in this nation where they were made welcome for a while and increased in great numbers. From the time of their arrival in Egypt, these 'Children of Israel' lived there for over four hundred years. Just before his death in Egypt, Jacob bestowed God's **seed-line** blessing upon his fourth son Judah. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh come" (Genesis 49:10). The sceptre was a symbolic term to describe the role of Jesus our Saviour and King.

## **15. The Exodus from Egypt after 400 years of bondage.**

1491 B.C. (Exodus means Departure)

After many generations in Egypt, the Israelites increased in great number; also called Hebrews. The later Egyptian Pharaohs became afraid of being out-numbered by these people, and also feared they would join with enemies in the event of war against Egypt. They were then suppressed under the bondage of slavery. To control their population growth, all male babies were to be killed at birth. This cruel decree was mostly ignored by the midwives, much to the displeasure of the ruling Pharaohs. Exodus chapter 1 and Chapter 2 records the birth of Moses whom God had chosen and called to lead His Israelite people out from Egypt to their former homeland of Canaan promised to their ancestors, Jacob and his twelve sons who had first lived there 400 years earlier before coming to Egypt. These people craved to be released from the cruel bondage of Egypt and live in the Promised Land, later to be nationally known as Israel.

## **16. Opposition from the Egyptian Pharaoh.**

God had planned Israel's departure from Egypt regardless of all opposition from the Pharaoh who wanted to use these people as his slaves. The first 13 chapters of Exodus explain how God eventually forced Pharaoh to release the Israelite people who possibly numbered in excess of two million souls. God intervened through various plagues, climaxed by the angel of death who killed the first born in every Egyptian home, but passed over and spared those in the homes of the Israelites. The importance of this Passover was always remembered and celebrated as a special event, among other festivals by the Israelite people, during the following centuries, until the time of Christ in the New Testament era. *Section 46* gives further explanation together with other details relating to their journey to the promised land of Canaan.

## **17. Israel crosses the Red Sea.**

The first 20 chapters in Exodus record sufficient proof of God's protection and providence for His Israelite people. Soon after leaving Egypt, Pharaoh's armies pursued them, and they were almost trapped at the Red Sea. However, Moses called upon God who parted the waters and they crossed over safely. God's miracle saved His people from these armies who, though they tried to follow them, were destroyed when He caused the waters to close down upon them. God's miracles came to pass on many future occasions. Without His constant help, their exodus from Egypt would have been quite impossible. After several weeks, God told them to assemble at Mount Sinai from where He gave His Ten Commandments to this newly constituted nation, comprising at least two million people. It all started from a humble beginning with Abraham and Sarah who were childless when God first made His promise to them hundreds of years earlier. With God, nothing is impossible.

When God gave His Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, He made a covenant (an agreement) with His servant people, whom he promised to be **the carriers of His Holy Word and bearers of His family 'seed-line'** promise made in Genesis 3:15. He gave them the moral law, the political law and all laws pertaining to worship. God promised blessings for faithfulness and obedience to Him as the one and only true God,

but also gave them severe warnings and His threats of punishment for contempt of His Word and the worship of false gods. They were offered this choice, but often ignored His warnings spoken through faithful prophets who proclaimed the dire consequences for blatant disobedience and the lack of true repentance.

When reading from Exodus 13-20, we notice how these people often displayed lack of trust in God and had already started to rebel soon after they left Egypt. This was despite the many wagon-loads of provisions given by the Egyptians who were relieved to see them leave, especially after the Passover scourge. This pattern of conduct persisted throughout their future history. When under pressure they murmured against God. During times of prosperity, affluence took the upper hand, and they rejected God by abusing His grace and providence. God often described them as stiff-necked people, but He persisted with His love through corrective judgments and remained loyal to His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Even now, people are still slow to learn from past mistakes, and especially when corrupt leaders encourage evil instead of calling people back to God in true repentance.

## **18. The Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle.**

God commanded Moses to make the Ark of the Covenant and also construct the Tabernacle. His instructions are recorded in Exodus 25. The Ark of the Covenant was a special chest made from Acacia wood and overlaid with gold, inside and out. Its size was 3¾ feet long, 2¼ feet wide and 2½ feet high. The Ark contained the two tablets of stone upon which God had written His Ten Commandments when giving His law from Mount Sinai.

Two golden images of angels were placed on either end of the lid, with each facing the Mercy Seat in the centre. When lambs were killed for sacrifices, the appointed priest received the blood from these animals, and sprinkled this over the Mercy Seat, which was regarded as a symbol of God's presence. This sprinkling of blood was a ceremony performed to atone for the people's sins, and fore-shadowed, or pointed to the future and final sacrifice, when Jesus would shed His blood and die when He was crucified to atone for all sins. The Ark was a mark of God's presence among His people on earth, and also described as God's throne, with the visible manifestation of our invisible God who made His everlasting covenant (agreement) between Himself and His people. The Ark occupied a special place in the Holy of Holies; a private inner sanctuary within the Tabernacle which God had commanded Moses to build. The appointed high priest was the only one permitted to enter this Holy sanctuary and sprinkle blood over the Mercy Seat. The tabernacle was a portable structure used for worship throughout their journey to Canaan. This continued for hundreds of years, until King Solomon built the temple for worship at Jerusalem during the early part of his reign centuries later, from 1015 to 975 B.C. Further comments about the Ark of the Covenant will be seen in section 23.

## **19. Journeys in the Wilderness.**

The people left Mount Sinai under the leadership of Moses and after a time approached the promised land of Canaan. Here they rebelled and through lack of faith refused to enter. They were afraid that the Canaanites were too powerful to conquer. This was not the first occasion when these people had disobeyed God, and certainly not the last! We read this in Numbers 13-14. In anger, God turned them back and made them wander in the wilderness for the next forty years. Following God's giving of His ten commandments in Exodus 20, the remainder of Exodus to chapter 40, records other events as these came to pass, and also various commands from God relating to His laws as in Leviticus also. Some of this is rather heavy reading, but is still important and interesting. The book of Numbers details the Israelites' journey to the plains of Moab (map 2), where preparations were made to enter Canaan under the leadership of Joshua.

## **20. Israel enters the promised land of Canaan.**

The book of Deuteronomy consists of a series of magnificent farewell addresses given by Moses prior to Israel's entry into Canaan. He had known these people for many years, and now he was soon going to

leave them. So often, they had given him a very hard time, and on occasions, he had almost come to the brink of despair! He frequently called upon God for help and strength to do his duty. He summarised the events as these had transpired since their deliverance from their slavery in Egypt, and said how this would have been impossible without God's almighty power. He exhorted the people to be faithful to God or suffer the consequences as God had already warned them right from the start.

God did not permit Moses to enter Canaan but instead let him view the land from a distance on Mount Nebo where he died aged 120 years; and God buried him. Moses was still fit and active before his death. Joshua took over the leadership role bestowed upon him beforehand by Moses who laid hands on him (Deuteronomy 34:9). Time charts state this came to pass 1451 B.C.

## **21. Israel's conquest of Canaan & the allocation of tribal territories.**

1451 B.C.

The book of Joshua chapters 1-6, records Israel's first major victory with the destruction of the city of Jericho. Other victorious battles followed. Prior to these times, the Canaanites were idol worshippers involved in the most vile heathen practices. God commanded the Israelites to burn and destroy everything and spare the lives of no one. In due course of time, territory boundaries were defined and allotted to each of the twelve tribes, in this new nation of Israel. To assist those not familiar with the tribal term, I shall explain the origin of this system.

It is necessary to observe how throughout Scripture, the Israelite people knew of their family tribal ancestry. This could be traced back to any one of the twelve sons of Jacob. For example, King David who lived hundreds of years later, knew he had descended from the tribe of Judah. Moses knew he belonged to the tribe of Levi, another son of Jacob. Likewise, St Paul, who lived during the New Testament era, knew he had descended from the tribe of Benjamin, another son of Jacob, and the list continues. During their 400 years of bondage in Egypt, the people knew which son of Jacob was the progenitor of their particular tribe. When these people settled in Canaan, the defined territories as allocated belonged to that particular tribe as named. Section 68 further explains the Israelite tribes. The book of Joshua describes in detail each boundary dividing the various tribal areas. (*See map 2.*)

## **22. Israel ruled first by Judges, and later by Kings.**

During their first four hundred years of occupation, Israel was ruled by judges, as recorded in the book of Judges. After this time, the people wished to be ruled by kings like other nations, hoping this would elevate their national status. This issue climaxed because Samuel's sons were unjust judges who also accepted bribes. In Genesis 35:11, nearly 1,000 years earlier, God had promised Abraham that his descendants would become a nation and a company of nations, and kings would reign from among his descendants. God's promise was still valid, but He was displeased because this demand was motivated by their pride and prestige and desire for a higher status to equal other nations. 1 Samuel 8:7 states how the people had actually rejected God by despising His system of ruling by judges. While, God did let the people have it their way, He told Samuel to warn the people of what a king, like all the other nations, would do. The remainder of 1 Samuel, chapter 8, records how Samuel's warnings were ignored.

Therefore, God told Samuel to anoint Saul, son of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin, as king over His people (1 Samuel 9-10). Saul was a tall, proud man who often disobeyed God, and as further recorded, was a treacherous and nasty fellow. On several occasions, he also cunningly attempted to kill David who became Israel's next king. King Saul began his reign over Israel in 1095 B.C. 1 Samuel 9-31 relates his life story, which ended in battle forty years later. (1055 B.C.)

## **23. The reign of King David, a key figure in Messianic history.**

David became the second king to reign over Israel from 1055 to 1015 B.C, and also their greatest Spiritual leader as king. Various writers describe him as a key figure in Messianic history and the 'type'

and prophecy of Jesus Christ who is named the Son of David in Matthew 1:1. God chose David as the **family 'seed-line'** descendant of Judah (Genesis 49:10), as a continuation of His promise given in Genesis 3:15. (See section 14). When Luke 2:11 and John 7:42 are studied together, and in proper context, it is clear that Jesus, our Saviour, had come from the seed of David, and was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. Other Bible quotations support this close affinity shared by Jesus and David. Strong's Bible Concordance lists over 1,100 references to David.

The Bible does not present David as a perfect man, but rather as one whom God chose for His purpose. It also exposes the human weaknesses of its various heroes. David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba brought sore punishment upon him, but he humbled himself in true repentance. The general character of David has been described, as a man who displayed passion, tenderness, generosity, a loyal friend, and a devoted father. As a poet and musician, he wrote many psalms for worship, meditation and true repentance. During the numerous wars, he was a soldier and a worthy statesman whose leadership displayed genuine humility and integrity. Other interesting parallels are observed in Scripture. David was once a shepherd. In John 10:11, Jesus called Himself the good shepherd. Both are called a prophet, priest and King, and both were hounded by their enemies! After King David's reign of forty years, his son Solomon became king over the nation of Israel. King David was truly a man after God's heart and had planned to build God's house of worship, 1 Kings 8:17-19. The Lord had told David that his son would build this place later. In 2 Samuel 7:11-16, the crucial **seed-line** must be considered within Bible context. As God had spoken; the Temple was to be provided through David's **seed**, but there was still to come a greater **Temple** than the earthly Temple soon to be built by Solomon. **It was Jesus, who fulfilled the 'seed-line' promise given to David, and passed on through his son Solomon. Jesus spoke of Himself as the everlasting Temple in John 2:19-21!**

### **23a. The reign of King Solomon, and Israel's glory. 1015 to 975 B.C.**

Following the time of Israel's entry into Canaan, and during the hundreds of years until the reign of King Solomon, this nation was involved in much warfare, defeating enemies who threatened its existence. During the reign of King Solomon, Israel enjoyed peace and prosperity unequalled in its history. He was endowed with the great wisdom he had asked for, and received as a special gift from God. People came from other lands to hear, and learn from his wisdom, some of which is found in the book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and his poetic book, Song of Solomon. During the fourth year of his reign, Solomon employed the vast resources of manpower, and commenced building the Temple according to God's plans for the place of worship in Jerusalem from where he reigned, as his father David did before him. This was to replace the portable Tabernacle used for worship during the many centuries since the Israelite people had departed from Egypt, and moved from place to place, along the journey to Canaan. When King Solomon's Temple was completed, the Ark of the Covenant was taken from the tabernacle and placed in the Holy of Holies, an inner sanctuary of the temple. (1 Kings 8:1-9)

The previous sections, (Sections 17 and 18) briefly described a few events after God had delivered His Israelite people from Egypt. The book of Leviticus records God's rules and commands to be obeyed by these people for good government and their personal benefit. This was to ensure God-pleasing freedom through correct discipline. God also described special sacrifices, and said when and how these were to be offered. He also commanded various other festivals and ceremonies to be observed; and also by future generations at the appointed time each year. Among these, there was for example, the Passover festival, to be celebrated each year, as a memorial of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, There was also another important day called the Day of Atonement to be observed each year, according to God's command. When sacrifices were made, the bloodshed by these lambs, foreshadowed or pointed to the future climax when Jesus, the true Lamb of God, was to be crucified centuries later, to make full and free atonement for the sins of all people. These sacrifices were then discontinued, after having fulfilled God's purpose, and were no longer required.

God gave these commands to His people to discipline them in love. He demanded obedience and faithfulness to Him and warned against the worship of false gods, knowing mankind's heart was inclined toward evil. God commanded Moses to make the Ark of the Covenant as the place of God's presence among His people and to assure them of His protection; but only when they remained faithful to Him.

This unique possession was never intended to be a lucky charm, as some wrongly came to regard it later, much to their regret. God does not work that way!

## **24. The completion of Solomon's temple and its dedication.**

The construction of the temple took seven years to complete. King Solomon's address to the people and his prayer of dedication is written in 1 Kings 8:15-53. King Solomon's powerful prayer was proof of his sincerity. Soon after this event, the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time and promised His blessings for faithfulness to Him, but also warned of the evil to follow, for the worship of false gods. (1 Kings 9:2-9) The temple is the most unique structure in world history, and King Solomon was given the honour of dedicating it to the Lord's service around 1,000 B.C. God had also bestowed His blessing of wisdom upon Solomon whose wise counsel and leadership featured during much of his reign. The Wisdom of Solomon is a term often used today.

## **25. The tragic collapse of Solomon's Kingdom. 975 B.C.**

Israel reached its height of national glory during the reign of King Solomon, but it also witnessed the beginning of its decline. Bible history relates this tragic story. During the latter part of his reign, Solomon became involved with hundreds of heathen women from nations where idols were worshipped: Moab, Edom, Sidon and others. He disobeyed God's prior warnings stated in 1 Kings 9:6-9, and followed his own inclinations. God was angry with him because his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel. Solomon had even built temples to worship the false gods, to please his many hundreds of heathen wives. We read this in 1 Kings 11, and how God spoke to him in verses 9-13. After reading his powerful prayer when the temple was dedicated during the early part of his reign, it is hard to believe how Solomon could turn away from God, and then encourage the worship of false gods. God teaches an important lesson here. From those in authority whose leadership demands responsibility, **God demands special responsibility!** A national collapse was imminent. Israel was about to fall apart, as Bible history teaches us.

## **26. The Kingdom of Israel divided. 975 B.C.**

King Solomon died after his reign of forty years (1 Kings 11:41-43). Thereafter, the nation was divided. Ten tribes occupied the northern land, starting from the boundary several miles north from Jerusalem. This kingdom was called the House of Israel. (*See map 3*). The first king to reign here was Jeroboam, a servant of the late King Solomon. He established the city of Shechem from where he reigned. Years later, the city of Samaria became the capital of the ten tribes in this northern kingdom of Israel. It was situated several miles northwest of Shechem. *Map 5* shows the province of Samaria, as it was called during the time of Jesus and many years before then. Jeroboam was an evil king who made a mockery of God's established sacrifices and festivals. He instituted the worship of the golden calf idols (1 Kings 12:25-33). In this kingdom, all future kings were evil and continued to turn many people away from the worship of our true God whom they rejected. The leaders ignored those who warned about God's punishment to come upon people who reject Him and worship false gods.

The southern kingdom of Judah retained its capital at Jerusalem, comprising the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. All kings who ruled here were **family 'seed-line'** descendants of David and Solomon, whose son Rehoboam became the first king to rule this nation. From here onwards, these two kingdoms followed a separate destiny. Both rejected God nationally, and apart from a few exceptions in the southern nation of Judah only, most of the kings were evil and led their people away from God into idol worship. At times prophets within these nations spoke up and warned their leaders of impending judgments resulting from rejecting God. They were ridiculed for daring to challenge their evil leaders. Among these were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos and Micah. Others were killed for preaching messages of warning. Read what Jesus said in Matthew 23:36-38.

## **27. A call for your attention.**

We have reached another major turning point in biblical history with far reaching results for future world events. In the past twenty-six sections, I have tried to direct readers to some of the major signposts in biblical history. I have left many gaps and some will be filled in the following pages. Opinions will vary regarding the use of this exercise, but it is impossible to include everything in a few pages. When writing this booklet much emphasis was related to the biblical signposts along God's path through world history. This would have assisted me to understand God's plans and purpose for His human race if I had not known anything much about the Bible. Knowledge of Bible history has due importance otherwise God would not have had it recorded in the first place. The two books of Kings carefully record documented history, starting with the reign of Solomon and the rise and fall of the world's most unique kingdom in history, and its collapse caused by the rejection of God. Even today, people are still slow to learn. Satan did not bluff God; he only tried! The New Testament proves how God always has the last word!

## **28. The exile of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.**

720 B.C. (Map 4a)

For over 250 years, the northern kingdom of Israel continued to reject God, and persisted with their evil practice to worship false gods such as Baal and many others. God's past warnings of judgment had now come to pass. These people were taken captive by the cruel, dreaded Assyrians from the north. After several years of bloodshed and misery, the exile was completed soon after 720 B.C. This tragedy affected several million people of Israel, few of whom ever returned. Needless to say, the minority of faithful suffered with the godless, as is always the case with war. These disobedient faithless people had lost their inheritance of The Promised Land. Their portion was also promised by God, over a thousand years earlier to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to be possessed by His servant people Israel. They had broken their covenant promise to be faithful to God. They had been properly warned, but now it was too late.

After the exile, this former Israelite territory became part of the Assyrian Empire and as time elapsed the land was repopulated with people from foreign nations, such as Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, Sepharvaim Babylon and many others. Some of these were ancestors of those known during New Testament times as the despised Samaritans who lived there when the area was called Samaria. (*see Map 5*)

## **29. The Southern Kingdom of Judah taken captive to Babylon.**

586 B.C. (Maps 4a and 4b)

About 130 years later, what remained of the population in the southern kingdom of Judah after numerous wars, were exiled to Babylon. They had been warned by God's chosen prophet Jeremiah, who was rather unpopular among the kings, most of whom were evil, together with their wicked associates. They treated Jeremiah with contempt when he warned about God's wrath and judgment about to descend upon the people because they turned away from Him by committing the most abominable sins. During their lifetimes and in their respective books, both Jeremiah and Isaiah warned about the consequences resulting from being unfaithful to God.

The Babylonian captivity of Judah occurred during the reign of King Zedekiah who was the last king in David's '**seed-line**' to reign in Judah. The armies of Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon's temple after taking a wealth of valuable possessions. The city lay desolate after much destruction. The people were taken captive to Babylon. Scripture tells how God spared His faithful prophet Jeremiah and a small remnant, including the king's daughters who were not taken captive. Jeremiah's book of Lamentations describes his anguish as an eyewitness to this disaster. This could have been averted, if the people had turned back to serve God. Now it was too late. Once again, a small minority of the faithful suffered with the godless. Daniel was among the faithful as we read in his book.

When the Babylonian armies ravaged Jerusalem and destroyed the temple, they took many precious vessels and other valuable material. (Jeremiah 52:12-23) Scripture is silent regarding the Ark of the



Covenant, so therefore its fate still remains a mystery. It was not recorded among the sacred items returned from Babylon to Judah seventy years later. (Ezra 1:7-11) Some Bible scholars believe it was destroyed when the Babylonians plundered Jerusalem. Others suggest that because Jeremiah was aware of its special importance, and the impending invasion and possible plundering of Jerusalem and the temple, he could have been prompted by God to remove the Ark of the Covenant from the temple and hide it underground somewhere, perhaps in the Jerusalem area. This is a possibility, but only an opinion. If we knew for sure that God wanted it preserved somewhere for safekeeping, then that would settle the matter. Until then, this will remain a question unanswered, and a mystery for God to reveal during a later time if that was ever His intention.

### 30. The exiled Judeans return from Babylon

(Map 4c)

After seventy years of captivity in Babylon, a company of 49,000 returned to Judah, and others also returned at various times. Ezra, who wrote his book during the fifth century B.C, describes their return and the many problems that arose while restoring the temple after it had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Following the respective captivities of these two kingdoms as briefly described in sections 28 and 29, **no part of God's land of promise** was ever again ruled by kings from the Israelites' descendants. The former kingdom of Judah was now also controlled by foreign powers. These included the Babylonians, then the Medes, Persians and others as future history came to pass. An infusion of foreign people into Judah took place after the Babylonian captivity. These were the Canaanites, Hittites, Perzites, Moabites, Ammonites, Egyptians and others of pagan cultures. Ezra was distressed because so many who returned from Babylon exile had inter-married with these heathen people. Therefore, Judah was becoming a nation of mixed nationality and culture. We recall how centuries earlier, King Solomon had married heathen wives, some of whom were from Edom, directly south of Judah. This was contrary to God's warning to His people after their departure from Egypt centuries earlier. However, at the time of Jesus centuries later, there were still those who were identified as descendants of the Israelite tribes of Benjamin Judah and Levi.

The foreign powers including the Medes and Persians permitted the people to conduct their own style of temple worship. Secular records compiled during the Old Testament era, confirm the accuracy of Holy Scripture. Many such records were written long before the prophet Malachi wrote the last Old Testament book, four hundred years before Christ was born. Pompey of Rome conquered Palestine in 63 B.C, when the Roman Caesar controlled its people. Herod became the King who reigned when Jesus was born (King Herod was a descendant of Esau; the twin brother to Jacob, and also the ancestor of the Edom people who were jealous of God's Israel nation). The entire population was suppressed through heavy taxation imposed by Roman rule. This was the political scene also in Judah where Jesus was born over 2,000 years ago. The spiritual condition of this nation had declined to a low level.

### 31. Descendants from Adam to Jesus Christ.

We have now completed Part 1 where I highlighted some of the major historical signposts along God's path through the Bible. Part 2 begins with the birth of Jesus who is the central figure throughout history. His ancestors have been carefully recorded in Bible genealogy, and these names begin in Genesis. To explain this, I have placed due emphasis on God's **family 'seed-line'** promise to be fulfilled by Jesus.

Now take a careful look at Genesis 3:15, where God uses symbolical terms to describe Satan's final defeat through the **seed of the woman**. He spoke of **Eve's seed**. The promised Saviour was to come through God's chosen **family 'seed-line'** descendants starting from Eve. God had already chosen Mary as the **'seed-line'** descendant and at God's appointed time, gave birth to Jesus who was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The Bible correctly proclaims Jesus as true God from all eternity and who became true man also when born of Mary.

I have listed **only some** of the many names of people in the complete genealogy recorded in the Bible: Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, Solomon and all kings who reigned in the Kingdom of Judah, until the Babylonian captivity. The following Bible references provide other names

recorded from after the Babylonian captivity, to the birth of Jesus. Genesis 5:1-32 names the '**seed-line**' descendants from Adam to Noah. Genesis 11:11-26 continues from Noah's son Shem to Abraham, from where the line is continued in Matthew 1:1-17, where the name of Jesus appears in verse 17. **Luke 3:23-38 begins with God who first made Adam, and records all 'seed-line' descendants to Jesus who fulfilled God's promise given in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:15)**

Some of our higher Bible critics regard the Old Testament as distasteful and depressing because of its history of bloodshed and violence. World history is littered with bloodshed, and our modern civilisations are no better. These critics overlook the basic truth that such a history came to pass because man rejected God. The Israelite people had enjoyed God's generous providence and protection, but chose to turn away and worship false gods; they ignored His warnings of punishment for being disobedient and unfaithful to the Lord. That is why they lost their land of inheritance promised to them through their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God always honoured His promises, but the people of Israel had so often treated their Lord with contempt and stubborn rebellion. Nevertheless, God had planned that Jesus would come to the world through His chosen '**seed-line**' from within His Israelite people and fulfil His promise made in Genesis 3:15.

*God's word is our great heritage  
And shall be ours forever,  
To spread its light from age to age  
Shall be our chief endeavour  
Our guide on life's way  
In death 'tis our stay  
Lord, while worlds endure  
May we retain it pure  
Throughout all generations.*



## **PART 2 The New Testament**

### **32. The New Testament era**

The New Testament confirms the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Some regard the Old Testament as being obsolete, out of date and therefore no longer relevant to our present age. Nothing could be further from the truth because the Old Testament and also especially the first several books form the foundation of all Scripture. The truths proclaimed therein are still applicable to our modern times.

- The absolute truth of Holy Scripture is upheld by this worthy quote:  
*“The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed.  
The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed!”*

### **33. Some New Testament historical landmarks**

These New Testament truths must be examined with due regard for their importance.

- Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit.
- His ministry among His people was a carefully planned purpose.
- His crucifixion was the Divine plan and purpose for Christ’s mission.
- His resurrection is a truth that cannot be disputed.
- Jesus commanded His disciples to proclaim Him as the only Saviour of all mankind.
- His ascension into Heaven was witnessed by His disciples.
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place on the day of Pentecost.
- The disciples then began their mission work.

### **34. The birth of Jesus (Approximately 2,000 years ago)**

(Map 5)

We now set the scene with the course of events relating to the birth of Jesus who was born at Bethlehem, the city of David, in the land of Judah. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of Mary, the wife of Joseph. (Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:34-35) They lived at Nazareth, a city in the province of Galilee. This was in the northern part of the former Israelite Kingdom occupied by the ten tribes exiled by the Assyrians about 720 B.C. Galilee embraced the former tribal areas of Zebulun and Naphtali, with part of the tribal territories of Issachar and Asher who were also sons of Jacob.

### **35. The province of Galilee where Jesus grew up**

(Map 5)

I will not confuse you with details describing wars and conquests, thus causing land to change hands under different leadership because the course of history is a complex study of its own. In section 29 I briefly described the Babylonian captivity with the siege of Jerusalem, when after many wars, the remainder of the Benjamin, Judah and Levi tribes were exiled to Babylon.

Seventy years later, and following Babylon’s fall to the Persian Empire, these tribes were permitted voluntary return to their homeland of Judah. A company of 49,000 returned, and others also accepted this privilege at various times. At some stage, others from these tribes migrated from Babylon and settled in Galilee. It is possible that Mary and Joseph, who lived there centuries later, could have been descendants from these portions of the Judean people. We know they were of the house and lineage of

David; a descendant of Judah who lived many hundreds of years earlier. Judah had received the ‘seed-line’ blessing from his father Jacob. *“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah---until Shiloh comes.”* (Genesis 49:10).

For several centuries before Christ’s birth, Galilee was partly populated with people from other nations. It also developed its own dialect, laws and coins. The province of Samaria lay to the south of Galilee as shown on map 5. The Samaritans were of mainly non-Israelite ancestry and were therefore often despised by the people of Judah who lived in their close proximity to the south.

As stated in sections 28 and 29, the Assyrian and Babylon captivities were followed by significant migrations from non-Israelite nations into these former Palestine territories. This caused changes to cultural and political structures during the following centuries. Eventually, after various conflicts, the entire Palestine area became subject to Roman domination about sixty three years before the birth of Jesus.

### **36. Details about the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.**

The birth of Jesus is recorded in the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke, and this confirms the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Shortly before the birth of Jesus, Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, decreed that a census (taxation census?) be taken throughout the land under Roman control. (Luke 2:1-5) Both Mary and Joseph belonged to the family lineage of David, (a descendant of Judah) so they were obliged to travel over eighty miles, (130 kms) from their home at Nazareth to Bethlehem the city of David, where Jesus was born. (Luke 2:16-17) Then in the following verses 8 to 38, Luke also describes other happenings relating to the early infancy of Jesus. While still at Bethlehem during His babyhood, the life of Jesus was under threat from King Herod. Matthew takes up the story in chapter two and explains how politics were involved in these events. We read how Joseph heeded God’s warning given to him in a dream, by taking both Mary and child to Egypt. After King Herod’s death, they finally returned to their home in Galilee, as God instructed them.

### **37. The early youth of Jesus.**

When Jesus was twelve years old, He went to Jerusalem with His parents who attended the annual Passover feast every year. (Luke 2:40-52) Whilst in the Temple, Jesus spoke to the teachers and doctors who were astonished at the knowledge and understanding coming from this young boy, as we read in verses 46 and 47. Of course, these men did not realise who was speaking! They only discovered that years later. (See section 42)

### **38. The three year ministry of Jesus.**

Scripture remains silent about the next eighteen years until Jesus began His three year ministry in Galilee, at the age of thirty. (Luke 3:23) This is where He performed His first miracle and 25 of His 33 miracles recorded in Scripture. As explained in section 34, the Galilee province was an area of the former ten tribes of the northern Israelite Kingdom, occupied by the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun before their Assyrian exile. Matthew 4:13-16 confirms that the ministry of Jesus, who started there, was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah 9:1-2, where Jesus, though not named, was spoken of as the Light. What could be a more fitting description?

### **39. The Baptism of Jesus. Matthew 3:1-17.**

Before beginning His ministry at the age of thirty, Jesus went from Galilee to the land of Judah where He was baptised by a man known as John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Jesus. John announced the coming of Jesus beforehand to many people whom he also baptised. We read this in the verse references above. John preached the need for repentance, and rebuked the Pharisees and other treacherous leaders for their hollow messages with false teachings, and warned them of the challenge

to come from the promised Lord who was about to enter the scene. John also baptised Jesus, who of course had no sin, but was baptised to fulfil all righteousness. We read this in verse 15. Jesus was baptised in the Jordan River which flows into the Dead Sea. (See Map 5)

#### **40. The temptation of Jesus. Matthew 4:1-11**

After His baptism, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1-11) This event has been described as a power struggle on the devil's part. He not only lost this battle, but also had his total defeat sealed forever when Jesus proclaimed His complete victory over sin, death and the devil's power. This happened three years later while still hanging on the cross. Jesus made His powerful everlasting proclamation of victory over the devil when He said, "*It is finished*". That was His parting shot! God's signature was already there before His resurrection was announced on the third day, after His crucifixion and death! Christ's work of redemption was complete, and He had now fulfilled God's Plan of Salvation to perfection. Despite his defeat, Satan still continues his attempts to corrupt and deceive mankind, whom Jesus came to save from eternal damnation.

#### **41. Jesus calls His disciples.**

Jesus chose His first disciples from Galilee and these were referred to as Galileans. (Acts 1:11, 2:7) His ministry extended south to Judah where Judas Iscariot lived and also became a chosen disciple, but who later betrayed his Lord. (Luke 22:47-48) These twelve men are named in Matthew 10:1-5, and Mark 3:14-19. Luke was a physician who wrote the book of 'Luke.' Though not named as one of the twelve, his knowledge and faith truly complemented the records of Matthew, Mark and John. These four books are called the Gospels and proclaim the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ alone. His mission purpose is explained with all necessary details of His life. The book of Acts was also written by Luke. He was a good friend of St Paul who also became another great missionary during that era. (See section 51)

Jesus led a sinless life which simply means that He did not sin when tempted. After beginning His ministry in Galilee where He preached and taught, He worked His way down to Judah and taught at Jerusalem and other places. Jesus showed great kindness wherever He went. He healed the sick, restored sight to the blind and raised some people from the dead. Jesus also showed His power through many other miracles, some of which are recorded in the Bible. He comforted the distressed, drove out demons and gave due attention to people who were despised or under bondage from any kind of sin. Jesus also showed compassion to the Samaritans, many of whom came to believe in Him as the promised Saviour. Jesus taught among groups of people, and also to individuals. He also preached sermons to large crowds. Read the Lord's great sermon when He preached from a mountain. (Matthew 5-7)

#### **42. Opposition from the religious leaders.**

Throughout His ministry, Jesus was challenged by the scribes and Pharisees as you will read. These men were the legalistic "top brass" religious leaders who had corrupted the true worship of God when they taught in the temple. These groups came into being many years before the time of Jesus, and through oral tradition had added to the laws of Moses their own laws which they regarded as being more important. They had made the law a bondage with laws and regulations that they themselves could not even keep. Jesus always had the perfect answer whenever they tried to bluff Him with all kinds of trick questions, and they did not appreciate His quick presence of mind with replies to silence them! They refused to accept Him as the promised Saviour. Jesus often rebuked them for their hypocrisy and legalistic snobbery. (Matthew 23) Whatever their depth of sincerity, they lacked proper knowledge about God's plan of salvation through Jesus, and were not prepared to learn.

### **43. Reactions from various people.**

The Bible clearly proclaims Jesus to be true God from all eternity, and born true man conceived by the Holy Spirit. He alone could obey God's laws perfectly, and without any blemish of sin. During His ministry, people either honoured or rejected Him, as is still the case today. Those who heard Jesus were astonished at His teachings that were so different to the hollow messages taught by their religious leaders. Many became believers in Jesus as their only Saviour. His power to perform miracles impressed other people for the wrong reasons. They believed that such a man would make an ideal king to free them from Roman rule, with its bondage of taxation and restore Israel to once again become a great nation provided for through his supernatural acts. This was not what Jesus intended. True, He is our King, but not the king these people sought after. Jesus was truly aware of the depraved spiritual conditions throughout this nation of Judah. He wept over the once great city of Jerusalem which God had designated as the central place of worship and the preservation of His Holy Word. His people had ignored and even killed past prophets who warned about God's judgment resulting from national corruption also rife in His Holy Temple. Read what Jesus said in Matthew 23; especially verses 23-39.

### **44. Christ's warnings about the fate of Judah.**

Whenever Jesus was confronted by the various religious leaders, He met their challenge head on with His unquestionable authority. The four gospel writers recorded some of these rather heated discussions. The rest may be left to our imagination, but the Pharisees did teach us one sound lesson to remember. Never attempt to outwit God. These men tried, but they always failed!

Among other warnings, Jesus declared that the Judah nation was finished, and unfortunately many had learned little or nothing from past history. Some Bible scholars have stated how the fate of Judah was prefigured when Jesus cursed a fig tree during a final visit to the temple. The tree died within a day. (Mark 11:13-20) This suggestion seems valid because in Old Testament Scripture, figs are sometimes mentioned with reference to the people of Judah. Jesus warned of the impending destruction of the temple (Luke 21:5-6). This happened about forty years later in 70 A.D, when the Romans destroyed the temple and Jerusalem lay in ruins. Some people escaped, but many were killed. Meanwhile, until this disaster forty years later, life went on with business as usual.

### **45. Events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus.**

The Pharisees and other religious leaders conspired to kill Jesus, whom they regarded as a fraud rather than the promised Saviour (Messiah). They accused Him of stirring up the people and misleading them with lies, when in fact Jesus was simply proclaiming the truth. Of course even today, truth mostly meets fierce opposition. Jesus was regarded as a threat to their authority. He was taken to court and sentenced to death by crucifixion. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John describe this in their four books. The so called court justice could be described in Australian language as a kangaroo court. In Matthew 27:25, the Judean mob of truth-haters invoked a curse upon themselves and their children - *"His blood be on us and on our children"*. It so happened, they soon got exactly what they asked for! Jesus had already warned them! He was crucified at a site called Golgotha, a short distance from Jerusalem. (Matthew 27) So Jesus died, nailed to a cross, but only to rise again from death, and greeting those He knew so well, a few days after His crucifixion.

### **46. The meaning of Christ's death and resurrection.**

Jesus knew that His sacrifice and death on the cross was the climax in God's plan to redeem Israel and people of all nations from sin and the power of the devil. God used man's wickedness to fulfil His plan of salvation. Scripture teaches how Jesus kept God's law perfectly in our stead, and carried upon Himself the entire burden of the world's guilt of sin when He was crucified. He proved Himself to be true God by rising from death, fit and well after this ordeal. The death and resurrection of Jesus is the climax of world history.



We now see how this climax ties together with events back in Israel's past history. Refer back to section 16 with reference to the time when the Israelite people were still under the bondage of Egyptian slavery. We recall how the Pharaoh refused to release God's people because he wanted to keep them as his slaves, but God intervened with ten plagues to force the Pharaoh to release them. The tenth and final plague was killing the first born of both man and also beasts of the Egyptians, throughout the land of Egypt. God was about to smite Egypt because of Pharaoh's refusal to release the people.

**To escape this scourge, the people of every Israelite household were commanded by God, through Moses, to kill a lamb in the evening of an appointed day. The blood from these lambs was placed on the two side door frames, and top panel of every Israelite home. They all did as commanded. That night the angel of death passed over these homes and in each family of Israelites, the first born was saved through the death of the lamb which was killed as a substitute.**

This disaster fell upon every Egyptian home throughout Egypt, and caused the Pharaoh to release the Israelite people in great haste. Read from Exodus 12:1, to at least verse 40. God commanded that in the future, this Passover event be celebrated each year to continually remind these people that without His intervention, their release from Egypt would have been impossible. These annual Passover celebrations were commanded by God, and foreshadowed two important future events, which occurred many centuries later during the annual Passover festival time. Bear in mind how at God's command, the blood shed by these many lambs featured so prominently in Israel's release from bondage. This also prefigured the climax when Jesus, **the true 'Lamb of God'**, was crucified, and shed His blood and carried our guilt and freed mankind from the devil's bondage of sin and eternal damnation. (Law, Gospel and repentance will be dealt with in section 59)

Something else important happened on that same night when Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot who was one of His disciples. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper when He celebrated the Passover with these men. As they were seated, He took bread, and broke it and gave a piece to each of His disciples. He said, *"Take eat, this is my body."* Then He gave the cup, and said to them, *"Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood which is shed for many, for the remission of sins"* (Matthew 26:26-28). At His command, the celebration of Christ's Holy Supper has been continued in the Christian church ever since that time. St Paul emphasised Christ's command which he quoted in 1 Corinthians 11: 24-26, *"...as often as you drink it..."*

You have read in section 23, how the blood of goats and lambs sacrificed at the appointed times of the year during Old Testament times, pointed to the climax when Jesus would shed His blood to provide free forgiveness for all sins through faith in Himself who carried our guilt. Naturally, these animal sacrifices made during previous centuries were no longer needed, having fulfilled their purpose through Christ's crucifixion. Just as lambs were once sacrificed as substitutes, so also was Jesus, the true Lamb of God, sacrificed in our stead. The work of redemption was completed by Jesus, as He said it would be, when speaking to His disciples before His crucifixion (Mark 8:31-33; John 2:19-22 and John 12:20-36). Jesus totally defeated the devil's evil attempts to wreck God's salvation promise given in Genesis 3:15.

In section 45, I wrote a brief account of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. The four Gospel writers truly complement each other with all necessary details to complete this story. The scene begins at Passover time, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, His betrayal by Judas, His capture, His trial, His crucifixion, His death on the cross, His burial, His resurrection, His appearance to many people, His command to His disciples and then His ascension into heaven. This is fully recorded in Matthew 26-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24 and John 17-21. It will be a worthy investment of time on your part, to read these inspired records.

## **47. The Resurrection of Jesus.**

Two important events took our Lord's disciples by surprise. The first was His death, and the second was His resurrection from death. They were not expecting either and were devastated when Jesus was led away to be tried and crucified. They witnessed the most corrupt court proceedings in world history, yet Jesus appeared so powerless against His enemies. It seemed as though His mission had failed. During their three years of instruction, Jesus had taught them about God's Kingdom, but the importance of His death had not properly registered in their minds. They still had more to learn, but that only happened

later when Jesus opened their understanding. Their second surprise came when told of Christ's resurrection which they were not expecting. The dead body of Jesus was buried in a tomb which is a cave-like cavity hewn in the side of a hill. A man called Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a secret believer, had prepared this tomb for himself and requested that Jesus be laid there. (Matthew 27:57-60, read also John 19:38-42) A huge stone was placed in the entrance to keep out intruders as we see in Matthew 27:62-66. Early in the morning of the third day after the crucifixion, some women visited the tomb to embalm the body of Jesus. On the way, they wondered who would move the heavy stone from the entrance. Upon their arrival, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. To their amazement, God's messengers greeted them with the news that Jesus had risen from death and was alive again as He had promised. The women were told to inform the disciples and others about His resurrection. They did so, but the people would not believe them. Peter also went to see the empty tomb, and was puzzled about what had come to pass. (Luke 24:12) Later that day Jesus appeared to His disciples, and during the following weeks until His ascension, He showed Himself to hundreds of other people, as the Gospel writers tell us.

#### **48. Proof of His Resurrection.**

All necessary biblical proofs of Christ's resurrection are recorded, as I already stated in the last two lines of section 46. Some years ago, a group of legal men decided to research the resurrection account of Jesus to determine whether its truth could be proved from a professionally legal point of view. Each man agreed to study the relevant Scriptures without consulting the other during this process. For the sake of this exercise, faith and religious beliefs were to be kept out of the study. When they compared their conclusions at a later time, each agreed that the resurrection was an historical truth provable from a legal viewpoint. Of course, the truth of God's Word must always be accepted through faith and many things in the Bible are not meant to be solved through human reason. I like to think that God set this up for future generations to examine as an indisputable proof of the resurrection of Jesus. It is interesting to learn how God has placed a wealth of evidence in our path to prove the truth of Scripture. Archaeologists have unearthed ancient cities and artefacts in modern Israel relating to Bible times. There are countless sources of evidence discovered in these areas and even further beyond.

#### **49. Christ's ascension into Heaven.**

Before proceeding with the book of Acts, it is necessary to read the last verses of Matthew 28, and Luke 24:44-53. Jesus had completed His work of redemption. Before ascending into Heaven, He commanded the disciples to proclaim His message of salvation to all nations, but first to stay in Jerusalem for several days and wait for the Holy Spirit to equip them with the divine power needed for their mission work. Jesus ascended into heaven from the slopes of the Mount of Olives near Bethany, a few kilometres east of Jerusalem. Luke wrote the book of Acts, which records the acts of the disciples whom Jesus commissioned to spread the Gospel. Prior to His ascension forty days after the Passover, Jesus opened the understanding of these men and promised to be with them at all times. His assurance also applied to all future generations of believers whose duty it is to proclaim repentance and free forgiveness through faith in Christ alone, and who will return at God's appointed time. (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:11)

#### **50. The Holy Spirit descends on the disciples at Pentecost.**

The festival of Pentecost was always celebrated seven weeks after the Passover. The offerings were called the 'first fruits' of the harvest. Acts 2 describes the miracle when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples when these men were assembled together on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly they were able to speak in other languages. Many people were also present at this time, and Peter spoke to the large crowd of people and explained to them what the crucifixion of Jesus was all about. The people listened and heeded Peter's call to repentance. Three thousand people became believers in Jesus and were baptised on that special day which is so often called the birthday of the Christian Church. It is also referred to as the day of first fruits for the future harvests, to continue until Jesus returns.

## **51. The mission work of Christ's disciples.**

Jesus often warned His disciples about the opposition they could expect when proclaiming His only true message of salvation, and they experienced much of this as the Bible tells us. Savage persecution has persisted throughout the ages to our present day, as we all know. Stephen was the first recorded martyr when he was stoned to death because of his faith in Jesus. We read about this in Acts 6-7.

One special enemy was Saul who was a descendant from the tribe of Benjamin. Saul's belief was influenced by the 'top brass' religious leaders of Judah. He nursed a bitter hatred for the followers of Jesus whom he also regarded with contempt. Saul was also a witness to Stephen's death. His brutal persecution against Christians is recorded in Acts 8-9. Chapter 9 tells of his conversion when on his way to Damascus to persecute more followers of Jesus. Thereafter he became a great missionary during that time. His name was later changed to Paul, and his thirteen books are recorded in the New Testament.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote the life story of Jesus. In his book of Acts, Luke outlines some activities of various disciples including St Paul, who was later chosen and converted by Jesus who appeared to him after His ascension. The other New Testament books were written as letters by Paul, Peter, James and John. The author of Hebrews is uncertain. John also wrote the book of Revelation when exiled on Patmos Island, 95-96 A.D. This was the revelation from Jesus Christ, signified by an angel sent to explain His message to John. This book is written in symbolic language and many find it difficult to understand. In general terms, it refers to both the immediate and distant future from that time, when people would continue to reject God's truth and turn away to false teachings as others have during past history. The book of Revelation warns of future persecution, wars, bloodshed and worldwide chaos during end times prior to Christ's return for judgment and resurrection of the dead.

## **52. Conclusion.**

The Bible does not record all day to day activities, or every hardship endured by Christ's missionaries, but these writers warned against false teachings and other problems caused by human failings still seen in people today. Pride was another evil with its pecking order, and is still with us today, causing divisions involving personal clashes among Christians. Proud human nature has always struggled for equality or superiority rather than unity. For any organisation to function properly, both leaders and followers are required, with each being aware of their responsibilities. Many people ignore the basic biblical definition of equality, which is unity and mutual respect, with everyone being conscious of their respective complementary roles. The devil makes many evil attempts to hinder the Holy Spirit whose power allows the seeds of faith to grow and prosper in the hearts of men, women and children, and keep them united in the one true faith in Jesus, our risen Lord and Saviour.



## Part 3 Summary

### 53. Summary.

As explained earlier, Jesus Christ is the central figure throughout all history, as revealed in the Bible. Without Him, the Bible would appear like any other book of ancient history with nothing much else to offer. To direct readers to the saving knowledge of Christ, I wrote this booklet to assist those with little or no prior introduction to the Bible, and to draw their attention to some interesting and important landmarks. This should help readers to become more familiar with Bible history as it came to pass under God's guidance. I will now explain other points deliberately omitted because I chose to concentrate on the important historical path first. At times it was difficult to decide what to leave out because everything in Scripture is important, but too much detail can confuse some readers. The many gaps left after this summary, will need to be filled in with further reading. This booklet was not intended to be a theological exercise, but rather a guide with limitations. However you may view my many omissions, please regard my honest intentions, bearing in mind that perfection will not be found in any man-made script.

### 54. Bible translations.

For many years, Bibles and parts thereof have been translated into thousands of languages and dialects. Millions of copies are being distributed worldwide, and also into nations where God's Word is forbidden under penalty of imprisonment, torture or death. God is often worshipped in secret. He has promised that His Word, "**does not return to Him void**", but will accomplish His purpose. Our western nations have enjoyed unrestricted access to the Bible, but it has so often been neglected by too many of us.

### 55. Misuse of the Bible.

There is an old saying that where God builds His church, the devil always builds his chapel alongside. Using various terms, Jesus describes the devil as His enemy who deceives people with subtle compromise when misusing Scripture, or quoting parts out of context. Bible truths are also challenged by those who bow to this enemy. There is nothing wrong with asking sensible questions about the Bible; in fact Jesus encourages it. In John 5:39 He said to search the Scriptures, "*...and they are they which testify of Me*". When people question or ridicule any part of the Bible, they insult the Holy Spirit who inspired these writings, and they also join hands with Satan who challenges God's infallible authority. In Matthew 28:20, Jesus told His disciples to observe all things as commanded by Him. These commands are now clearly stated in Scripture. Those who add extra, or reject parts they may dislike, are guilty of deception and become their own worst enemies, and God's enemies also, unless they repent and return to the truth.

We know Satan is the author of deception, but when so-called Bible teachers distort and manipulate Scripture to their liking, they must share equal blame with Satan for choosing to lead people along the wrong path in defiance of God's Word with its clear direction. But this they choose to reject. It is tragic to see how man's foolishness proclaims so many false versions of God's truth. The results are always disastrous.

### 56. Basic Bible truths.

Christ commands us to proclaim His message of salvation across the world despite the faults and shortcomings of our human nature, knowing we cannot succeed without divine help. Conversions to the Christian faith can only happen through the power of the Holy Spirit who has continually worked among our human race, to enlighten us through the spoken and written Word of God. The Holy Spirit opens our understanding to make it possible for us to believe in Jesus. The following Bible quotes clarify this vital point.

**1 Corinthians 6:11** “But you are washed, but you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”.

**1 Corinthians 12:3** “No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit”.

**Romans 8:7** “The carnal mind is enmity against God”.

To keep it simple, as God always does, no one can claim to make any genuine decision for commitment to Christ until the Holy Spirit has broken through our carnal sinful barrier that separates us from God. The power of the Holy Spirit works through the teaching of God’s Word, and also the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. In this way He strengthens and preserves our faith in Jesus among individuals in the Christian church worldwide. Unfortunately, many people still choose to reject God as others have done throughout history.

## **57. Our Triune God.**

Christians worship the one and only eternal Triune God, described in our restricted human language as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Not three Gods, but one God**, with three distinct persons in the one Divine Godhead. For centuries, responsible men and women have struggled for words attempting to explain this divine mystery. Both human language and earthly analysis, fail to solve this mystery that remains at a level far beyond the scope of human understanding.

**The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are God.**

The Father is NOT the Son or the Holy Spirit.

The Son is NOT the Father or the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is NOT the Father or the Son.

**YET ALL THREE ARE EQUAL IN MAJESTY AND GLORY.**

Christians believe this, but none can claim to understand it. What cannot be fathomed by our human reason needs to be accepted through faith. To understand this truth, we would need to be equal with God. One of many proofs found in Scripture is recorded in Matthew 28:19 when Jesus spoke to His disciples at the time of His ascension, when He said, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* With these words, Jesus supplied sufficient proof to support other biblical evidence of this truth. God is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, with no beginning, and will live forever. He will always be the same God, and without change forever. We cannot fathom eternity. Our life span would not register as a fraction of a split second compared to eternity. Perhaps eternity could be likened to the boundless outer space. God’s power and knowledge is without limit. He is present everywhere. He is without sin, and His justice is perfect. He is faithful and never departs from His Word. His gracious love and kindness cannot be surpassed. Our human language is inadequate to express sufficient praise for our Almighty God of heaven and earth.

## **58. Our eternal destination.**

Whether we like it or not, and if prepared or not, we all must die and face eternity. The Bible has much to say about the only two destinations, both of which last forever. Eternal salvation in God’s heavenly kingdom is the place for all true believers in Christ. Eternal damnation in the everlasting torments of hell is reserved for those who rejected Jesus during this life by treating His saving message with contempt. Scripture makes no mention of any halfway place for people who missed out on heaven, and then given another chance. Any teachings regarding hell as being of limited duration are an abuse of Bible terminology. Read what Jesus said about hell in Matthew 25:41-46 and Mark 9:43-48. His statements should close any further debate and settle this matter.

The Bible clearly teaches the reality of hell as the place of eternal punishment, but some people avoid any mention of it. They say this only scares everyone. A Bible concordance will give many references throughout Scripture using various terms to describe hell, such as eternal death, eternal damnation, everlasting punishment and others. Jesus contributed His share of severe warnings about hell as we read in Matthew 25:41. Many people still refuse to believe in the existence of hell. In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus proclaimed the real truth when telling the story of a man who went to hell. If this man did not believe about hell beforehand, then he certainly changed his mind when he arrived there. Jesus often warned that hell is a reality and He warned about hell more strongly than anyone else in the Bible. To conclude, other references are found in Isaiah 33:14, Revelation 14:11, Revelation 20:1, Revelation 20:15 and Jude verse 13, to mention only a few for you to begin with.

## **59. Sin, Law and Gospel proclaimed in proper balance.**

It is important to understand how God's Word teaches everything in proper balance. For example, what is sin? Sin is every kind of disobedience to God's laws and commands whether by thought, word or action (1 John 3:4). There is also our sinful nature we all inherit from our parents and ancestors back to Adam and Eve who first disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. We need to look carefully at the Law and the Gospel to see how both must be taught together in proper balance, according to God's command.

God's Law shows what is right and where we go wrong. It shows us how our sin separates us from God whose justice and righteous anger hates every sin. The Law demands, condemns and convicts us and threatens God's judgment upon those who through blatant disobedience also treat Him with contempt. (Exodus 20:5) God's warnings given here are repeated later hundreds of times throughout Scripture. It so happens that none of us can keep God's Law perfectly and even one sin makes us guilty (James 2:10), as it was with Adam and Eve. None of us can boast if we calculate our score according to God's Ten Commandments. **THE LAW AND OUR SIN, WITH THE NEED FOR OUR TRUE REPENTANCE, MUST BE PROCLAIMED IF WE ARE TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SINFUL AND HELPLESS CONDITION IN GOD'S SIGHT.**

False teachers avoid any mention regarding God's Law and sin. Perhaps that's a blow to their pride! God's **faithful teachers** always preach the Law that only Jesus could keep perfectly. Therefore because of our sinful condition, we must heed the solutions to this problem as proclaimed in the only true Gospel which is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. The Gospel proclaims God's great love and what He has done for the forgiveness of ALL sin and our salvation through Jesus Christ who carried the guilt of all mankind when He was crucified. The Gospel promises, offers, gives and assures us of full and free forgiveness of ALL SINS and the certain hope of eternal life in Heaven. Read John 3:16 and Romans 1:16-17. Naturally, each of us must believe for ourselves that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour. No one can believe or have faith on our behalf.

There are no pretty words to disguise the tragedy of sin, and those who proclaim God's Word must always emphasise this. God's Law and Gospel must always be proclaimed in partnership because both teach how it is impossible to earn salvation by mere good works or trying to keep God's Law for that reason. However, if we hope to retain forgiveness, then through faith in Christ's work of redemption, and also repentance and obedience, we must respect God's laws; otherwise we will become guilty of abusing His grace. Read St Paul's warning in Romans 6:1-2, "*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we...*" Now read all of Romans chapter 6. Can you recall me saying in Section 1 how God's Word is simple? To appreciate this we need to listen, believe and trust in everything He teaches us.

## **60. Reflections on Christ's crucifixion.**

Throughout the ages, lifeless false gods, whatever they are, or still may be, have been worshipped worldwide. Both Israel and Judah also rejected our only true God and worshipped these useless dead images which were only a product of mankind's depraved imagination. This widespread practice still continues today with the worship of various useless images made from wood or stone. I also refer to other false religions that keep much of the world's population under the bondage of pagan belief with

their worship of **non-existent beings that are without life and therefore cannot relate to mankind, or make promises for the future.**

In contrast, the coming of Jesus was already promised 4000 years before His birth into our world. Sin entered the world when Adam and Eve allowed Satan to deceive them; hence the need for the promised Saviour. (Genesis 3:15) Then continued a long series of countdowns, with many historical landmarks and inspired statements recorded by various Old Testament writers hundreds of years before the final climax when Jesus was crucified to fulfil this prophecy. Some of these prophecies are recorded in Isaiah 53-66. Psalm 22 is another one of many prophetic writings. All New Testament books provide evidence that Jesus fulfilled this long awaited promise. **There is only one true God who could make such a promise and have it fulfilled so perfectly, and with such precise timing after so many centuries of traumatic history!**

Jesus could have easily arrived with great pomp and escorted by angels to the places of fame in Jerusalem, and appear in the temple. Better still, to sit among the highly educated leaders, and display supernatural stunts to impress everyone. All could then stand to attention and greet this promised Messiah worthy of a sumptuous banquet prepared in His honour. Instead of all that, Jesus was born in a stable where animals ate and slept, and laid in a manger. Not a particularly hygienic place for any child to be born, but it did suffice when there were no other options at the time. None of the religious leaders came to welcome our newborn Lord, but God did provide appreciative visitors of His choice. Shepherds nearby could hardly arrive soon enough after the angel told them of the Saviour's birth. At Christmas time, we meditate on this when celebrating His birth. During Easter, we remember His death and resurrection after He was crucified to redeem all people, including His enemies many of whom still choose to reject Him and will be lost in hell forever.

Death by crucifixion had been practised by the Romans for many years before the time of Jesus. This slow agonising death was reserved for the worst criminals. Throughout history and up to our present times, human depravity knows no limits to cruelty as seen in wars, riots and persecution. However emotional anyone may become about the extreme bodily cruelty inflicted upon Jesus, we must never underestimate the intense mental agony as He carried the enormous load of our sin and guilt when He was made to be sin for us. Yet He was totally innocent. Well may we ask which caused Jesus the greatest anguish? His mental agony dare not be under-estimated. If this is not proclaimed properly, then we omit the vital purpose of His crucifixion and almost leave Jesus to appear as another martyr, and nothing much else.

The Bible clearly proclaims Jesus as being true God from all eternity and who became true man also, when He became the son of Mary who conceived by the Holy Spirit. He possessed His divine nature and also a human nature with its daily needs. At the appointed time Jesus fulfilled His Father's plan of salvation which was something no earthly man could achieve. The Father's wrath and punishment due to us was charged to His account and fully paid for when on the cross He said, "*It is finished.*" Our huge load of sin-debt was cancelled when Jesus paid the full price for our sins through His atoning sacrifice.

Christ's work of redemption was now completed, but the story continues because He rose from the dead, and several weeks later ascended into heaven. Important truths come to our notice as we refer back to sections 16, 23 and 46. Centuries earlier, God commanded His Israelite people to sacrifice lambs as sin offerings. The appointed priest received the blood from these animals and sprinkled this over the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant to atone for all national and personal sins. This pointed to the final climax when Jesus fulfilled the ultimate purpose on the cross to atone for all sins worldwide. Tragically, many still choose to ridicule this vital message of salvation.

Matthew 27:45-53 tells us that before Jesus died and while still nailed to the cross, there was darkness over the land from the sixth hour to the ninth hour. God did not permit the sun to give light during these last hours of agony inflicted upon His innocent Son, Jesus, Who carried our guilt of sin. As you read this, bear in mind that Holy Scripture associates sin with spiritual darkness. Likewise, creation groaned and quaked in dismay because of the extreme anguish imposed on its Maker. Then at about the ninth hour Jesus cried out. "*My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*" Here, Jesus the Son of God was forsaken by God the Father during this climax in history. Who of us can fully grasp the full impact of this? Jesus had to experience this horrendous separation on our behalf to fulfil God's plan of salvation for all of us. Had He not done so, we would have been separated and forsaken by God for all eternity in hell.



Matthew 27:51 says that when Jesus died, the veil of the temple was split from top to bottom. This veil or curtain was about the width of a hand in thickness. This kept the inner sanctuary, called the Holy of Holies, separate from the rest of the temple as described in sections 18 and 23. Only the appointed priest was allowed to enter, and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle the lamb's blood over the Mercy Seat to atone for the people's sins. After the perfect sacrifice made by Jesus, this system had fulfilled its purpose and was no longer needed. The parting of the veil signifies that we have personal access to the Father through Jesus Christ, who as the true Lamb of God, sacrificed Himself to assure us of full and free forgiveness from our sins. Matthew 27:52-53, tell how many deceased saints came alive at this time and appeared to numerous people in Jerusalem. This was foretold by the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years earlier (Isaiah 26:19). It came to pass because of the Lord's resurrection. We are not told what these people did or said, but one thing is certain. Jesus won His victory over sin, death Satan and hell. We have full assurance of our resurrection and everlasting life in God's heavenly kingdom. The next historical event will be marked by Christ's promised return.

## **61. The Power of Prayer.**

Prayer is simply talking to God in true faith. Throughout the Bible its power is revealed as an act of worship and a privilege God has given us to enjoy a close affinity with Him. Prayer is evidence of our faith in our Lord who alone can hear, and knows our needs before we ask, and answers according to His will. God invites us to pray for the daily needs of ourselves and others, and also forgive those who mistreat us, but we dare not attempt to demand or force anything from God. We are to thank Him for the gift of His precious Word, to be taught in truth, to glorify His Holy name. The Bible does not teach us to pray for the dead. The deceased are beyond God's time of grace and opportunity that expires at the time of death.

Jesus prayed to his Father many times and also instructed His disciples how to pray. He taught them the Lord's Prayer which is so basic, yet so complete because therein all our needs are met. Read Matthew 6:9-15 and Luke 11:1-4. This prayer begins by giving due honour to our heavenly Father, and it continues with the upholding and teaching of His Holy Word. We then ask for our daily needs, the forgiveness of our sins, the protection from evil and our belief in His everlasting Kingdom. This unique model prayer may be used in that form, and also as a guide for all prayers as occasions arise, either in private or among other people. We should always pray to God in true faith and humility, using words that enter our minds at the time. Jesus warned against public displays of false piety, where long stylish prayers are repeated many times over, just to impress other people.

God knows every situation even before we ask, and He invites us to seek His help at all times, especially during days of trouble, and to pray with sincere faith in His ability to provide, protect and comfort. At all times we must thank Him in the name of Jesus, regardless of the problem. He knows the best way to answer our prayer. More could be written here, but I direct your attention to the words of Jesus found in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who wrote all we need to know about the life of our Lord. Here Jesus explains the use of prayer in His usual interesting down to earth manner. In Matthew 4:10 Jesus emphasises His essential warning to pray to God and Him only, who is our almighty and living God. This is stated in Psalm 5:2, Daniel 9:19 and Acts 10:2. A Bible concordance will help you find hundreds of other references. Please heed these following words of caution. However sincere may be any prayers to Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus, or to any departed saints, such prayers are useless and also contrary to God's command.

Although Mary was given the honour of becoming the earthly mother of Jesus, God did not elevate her to be part of His saving grace to intercede for us. Such a claim is unscriptural as Jesus Christ alone is our mediator as we read in 1 Timothy 2:5. There is no biblical evidence to justify this position placed upon her by those who make this false claim for Mary or any other deceased persons who were also sinners in need of Christ's redemption. We cannot communicate with the dead and God strictly forbids all such attempts in Deuteronomy 18:11 when condemning witchcraft. Whenever this is done through prayer, it becomes another form of godless worship and is an abomination in God's sight. The deceased are unaware of our needs and are equally unable to help or intercede for us.

## 62. Bible names and their meanings.

During past ages names have often been used to identify people. The origin of many names can be traced back to some special event, a personal characteristic, or even a wish to define its meaning. This practice started in Genesis and has continued on from there.

- Genesis 3:20.** Adam called his wife Eve because she was the mother of all living.
- Genesis 17:5-8.** God changed Abram's name to Abraham because he was to be the father of many nations 'and kings shall come out of thee.'
- Genesis 17:15-16.** Sarai was Abraham's wife, but God changed her name to Sarah because she was to be the mother of many nations to be reigned by kings.
- Genesis 21:5-6.** Isaac's name meant laughter.
- Genesis 32:24-32** Jacobs name was changed to Israel. He had power with, and under God.
- 1 Samuel 1:1-28.** Hannah named her son Samuel because she had asked the Lord for this child.
- Matthew 1:21.** The Saviour was called Jesus because, "*He shall save His people from their sins.*"

The long list continues with the same practice applied to many names and places in Bible lands. We now refer back briefly, to sections 12 and 13, where I stated that the Israelites were also called Hebrews. This was a name derived from a man called Eber (also called Heber) who was the great grandson of Shem, the son of Noah. Heber was an ancestor of Abraham who, as I stated in section 12, lived at Ur in Chaldea, a southern province of Babylonia, near the head of the Persian Gulf; being the man God chose to become the forefather of the Israelites. See map 1.

It appears Heber's personal name also implied an ethnic meaning ascribed to this ancestor applicable for the origin of the Hebrew name derived from Heber. The name Heber signifies one that passes over and becomes an immigrant from the other side. This happened generations later when Abraham passed across the borders of his homeland after being called by God, and migrated into Canaan, but retaining the ancestral title which developed into 'Hebrew'.

Since the biblical era, this practice has continued worldwide as names are selected for nations, cities, towns, districts and various locations to describe the initial reason for whatever names are chosen for future remembrance. It is interesting to observe that across the globe, and also throughout western hemisphere, there are numerous places with names, or part thereof, derived from a biblical origin. This also applies to names of people with Bible names. In contrast, parents would mostly avoid naming a child after Judas the traitor who betrayed Jesus, his Lord and Master, for a few miserable coins.

In section 51, I named some books in the New Testament. All books in the Bible were named as such for specific reasons. Numerous books bear the author's names, and other books are about the lives of various men or women. The New Testament contains several books which are letters written to people for various reasons. The titles of books listed below have special meanings as I will explain.

- GENESIS** Pertains to the beginning when God created the world and is the foundation of all Scripture where other important origins are recorded with prophetic statements.
- EXODUS** Exodus means coming out. The Israel people departed from Egypt.
- LEVITICUS** This book is about God's Laws given to Israel relating to worship. He also gave rules for their moral conduct.
- NUMBERS** This relates to the numbers of people delivered from Egypt.
- DEUTERONOMY** Shortly before his death, Moses repeated God's laws to the people before their entry into Canaan. He emphasised true obedience and faithfulness to the one and only God.
- JOSHUA** Joshua succeeded Moses and led the Israel people into Canaan.

<b>JUDGES &amp; SAMUEL</b>	The people of Israel were governed by judges for several hundred years after their conquest of Canaan.
<b>1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> KINGS</b>	These books relate to various Kings of Israel and Judah.
<b>1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> CHRONICLES</b>	These both give detailed history relating to the books of Kings.
<b>PSALMS</b>	The psalms are hymns and prayers written by King David and other composers.
<b>PROVERBS</b>	These are gems of wisdom written by King Solomon and others.
<b>ECCLESIASTES &amp; SONG OF SOLOMON.</b>	Both were written by King Solomon.
<b>LAMENTATIONS</b>	Jeremiah expresses grief after the Babylonian exile of Judah.

Other Old Testament books are worthy of much more than these brief comments. The books of Ruth and Esther tell about two of many women who fulfilled crucial roles during Israel's history. Other Old Testament books as they appear from Isaiah to Malachi bear the names of God's faithful prophets, who preached warning messages to the disobedient people of Israel. They also proclaimed messages of hope for the future with special reference to the coming of the Saviour, also called Messiah.

### **63. The honour of proclaiming God's Word.**

Shortly before His ascension, Jesus opened the understanding of His disciples, whom He had taught during His three year ministry. Judas the traitor was later replaced by Matthias, as we read in Acts 1:23-26. When Jesus commanded His disciples to proclaim the Gospel message of salvation to all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15), He knew they would meet much opposition, and it has been the same ever since. Jesus promised the assurance of His guidance and comfort to them and all true believers who look forward to His return at God's appointed time.

During the past two thousand years, God's Word has been proclaimed in all directions. Our western nations have also continued this work, however imperfectly many times. Throughout the centuries our Christian Church has been attacked by at least two enemies; those from within the Church, and those from the outside. Internal dissension has caused the false teaching of God's Word, thus leaving a corrupted version of the truth. Persecution and bloodshed has often resulted when truth has been distorted and corrupted. Many who attempted to reform the Church were cruelly put to death for daring to challenge the evil teachings. Martin Luther, John and Charles Wesley were among those who survived with success. Unfortunately, many are slow to learn from history.

True Christianity seeks to invite and convert as Jesus did, **but not through force**. Our Lord always taught and led without coercion! The counterfeit version does the opposite, using deceit, ridicule and persecution. Christians who are persecuted have a duty to stand up for their Christian faith and defend themselves with lawful means. We should thank God, who bestowed upon us the privilege of proclaiming His Holy Word. Take note how Jesus always emphasised our responsibilities but didn't waste His time harping on our petty rights!

### **64. Judgment Day.**

The Day of Judgment is a subject most people prefer to avoid. Whether we like it or not, that day will come, as Jesus said in Matthew 16:27 and Matthew 25:31-46. He will judge all people living, and also the dead who will be raised to life again. (Acts 10:42) People who refuse to believe this will suddenly change their minds! That day will come without warning as we read in 2 Peter 3:10. None can escape (2 Corinthians 5:10). God has appointed the day when Jesus will come with the angels in glory (Acts 17:31, Matthew 25:31). Judgment and damnation in hell will fall heavily upon false teachers, hypocrites and scoffing unbelievers (Matthew 23 to 25). This will be a day of great joy for all true believers in Jesus Christ. They will experience joy in God's everlasting Heavenly Kingdom where sin and evil does not exist.

## 65. God's Holy Angels.

God's angels receive prominence hundreds of times throughout the Bible. They were created by God and are holy spirits already confirmed in their bliss, and power. The angels praise God and carry out His commands to serve mankind. We read this in 2 Kings 19:35, Matthew 18:10, Matthew 25:31, Luke 16:22 and Hebrews 1:14. The angels also use their protecting power (Psalm 34:7, Psalm 91:11, Daniel 6:21-22, Acts 12:5-11). An angel appeared to Mary regarding the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-35), and also spoke to her husband Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25). The long list continues. Hundreds of books written since Bible times verify the reality of angels. Such literature is available from Christian book shops. Reliable wartime accounts have also been written by top military personnel who have witnessed the unexplainable presence of men who suddenly appeared during a crisis. After having performed their duty, they quickly disappear. Angels also exercise protection without their visible presence. Satan the father of lies, (John 8:44) was once a holy angel but rebelled against God who cast him out of heaven with other fallen angels who followed their rebellious leader. They are God's rejected enemies doomed to eternal damnation in hell (Jude 6). The same fate awaits those who die in scoffing unbelief, and contempt for the Holy Spirit who invites us with Christ's saving message. Angels are spoken of hundreds of times throughout Scripture.

## 66. Evolution

Evolution challenges God's creation account recorded in Genesis. It falsely teaches how the universe, the world and all therein, including animals, plants and humans, came into being by chance over billions of years as the result of a **big bang** that started off somewhere. So far nobody has discovered what caused the **big bang!** Evolutionists ignore the basic truth how God has arranged countless combinations of elements within His creation, to sustain life and cause everything to function in the proper manner. Read Psalm 104:1-35, then also Psalm 136:1-9, Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 11:3. There are more Bible references to prove that our world did not come into being by accident, but rather how God created everything that exists. He controls all movements of the sun, moon, stars and our world otherwise there would be absolute chaos throughout the entire universe, including our earth.

It is surprising how many people believe in some form of divinely guided evolution, and reject the Bible account of creation which clearly states that God completed His creation in six normal days. They argue that God could have made everything through evolution over billions of years if He chose to. We learn nothing from such useless speculation. Science is misused to support this fallacy and it is not taught in Scripture. It is more rational to study Genesis chapters one and two, and read what God said He did. These two chapters mesh together in perfect harmony. A more detailed explanation will be given in the '**Supplement to Evolution**'. Many people question the length of days so clearly stated in Genesis. They misuse 2 Peter 3:8 where this disciple glorified our eternal and timeless almighty God. He was not referring to the creation issue and this symbolic application was not recorded for that purpose.

The Bible does not teach any form of divinely guided evolution. In fact God already settled any arguments in Exodus 20:11 by saying He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. Genesis 1:26-28,31 clearly states that God made the man and woman on the sixth day, and told them to be fruitful and multiply. Cain was born after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 4:1) Our higher critics claim each creation day was 1,000 years or of longer duration, but this belief clashes with Scripture. For example, God said He rested on the seventh day, so our critics are obliged to say He rested for at least 1,000 years or longer! This would then have to mean that Adam and Eve were at least 1,000 years old before having any children! If that is so, then how could Adam live through this **long day** when he already died at 930 years of age? A further question arises. How could Adam, who was made on the sixth day, live through this **long day**, be only 130 years of age when he begat Seth? Creation always seems to be a special target for those who teach any form of evolution. Evolution cannot state when the first twenty-four hour day began, nor can it guide us to when or where the Bible time line starts. **It is not my place to judge and condemn those believing in evolution, which is not taught in the Bible, but it is my duty to warn against this false teaching that is inspired by Satan, who threatens to undermine Genesis, which is the foundation of Holy Scripture.**

Within our midst, there are dedicated Christian groups conducting lectures to disprove the false teaching of evolution, and some of the most dedicated speakers are those who once believed in evolution but have turned away from it, and now proclaim the Bible truth of God's creation. Man continually boasts about his discoveries and modern technology, but this is achieved only through trial and error, and all finished products are far from perfect. In contrast, God saw His creation as perfect (Genesis 1:31). However, although the world was perfect when God created it, mankind's sin has caused death, decay and much devastation worldwide. (See supplement on page 65.)

## **67. Ages of people recorded in Genesis.**

Some people challenge the ages of people as recorded in Genesis where it states that Adam lived 930 years, Seth - 905, Noah - 950 and Methuselah - 969, to mention only a few. There is no doubt there were other men and women whose names are not recorded and also lived to great ages to produce many children to populate God's newly created world.

Perhaps there were other reasons for allowing such long lives during those early times. However, because of human sin, since creation the average life span of mankind has gradually been decreasing. After the great flood, about 1,600 years after creation, life spans dramatically started decreasing. As time passed, life spans reduced to where today the average life span (at least in western cultures) is around 70-80 years. Although Psalm 90:10 says *"The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years...."*, as this was written by Moses, who himself lived to be 120 years, he clearly was not intending to mean everyone. Even today, in some countries, people live well over 100 years, whilst elsewhere the average life span is far less. More comments could be added here, but there are no valid reasons to doubt these long life spans as recorded. Many centuries later, Jesus frequently referred to Old Testament Scripture which He knew perfectly, but never made any corrections because there were no errors! I could not imagine Jesus challenging His divinely inspired records.

## **68. Israel's tribal emblems.**

In section 21, I referred to Israel's conquest of Canaan, followed by the allocation of their tribal territories, and also explained the origin of these tribal names which identified the family descendants from Jacob's twelve sons. I promised further explanation in this section. Before proceeding, it could help to carefully read from Genesis 37 to 50 where the life of Joseph is recorded. I wrote about him in sections 13 and 14. The story of Joseph's life fits so perfectly into God's plan for His servant Israelite people, despite their evil mistakes and stubborn rebellion against Him, so evident during future history. Genesis 48 to 49 record two important incidents rarely mentioned despite their importance relating to God's plan and purpose for His Israelite people. Let us reflect on several highlights starting from Genesis 37.

- Jacob (Israel) and his twelve sons lived in Canaan. Years earlier, God had promised this land to Jacob's grandfather Abraham as we read in sections 11 and 12.
- Joseph, the second youngest son of Jacob, was despised by his ten older brothers, whose evil actions often grieved their father.
- At the age of seventeen Joseph was sold by these brothers to merchants travelling to Egypt.
- Upon his arrival in Egypt, Joseph served his masters faithfully and was later promoted for his integrity and obedience to God and was made governor of Egypt at the age of thirty years.
- Pharaoh the King of Egypt, knew Joseph could be trusted, and gave him the responsibility to organise the production and storage of huge quantities of grain during the seven years of abundance in preparation for the seven years of drought to follow. Genesis 41 to 48.
- Before the years of famine, Joseph married Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, the priest of On (Genesis 42:50).

- The seven year drought affected not only Egypt, but also other nations including Canaan where Joseph's father and brothers lived.
- When Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent the ten older sons there to buy food.
- None of these brothers expected to meet Joseph, who recognised them, but he only made himself known to them after their second visit later on to buy more grain. Over twenty years had passed since they had sold him to the merchants who were going to Egypt.

Genesis 43 and 44 reveal the wise strategy used by Joseph to test his brothers before introducing himself. Chapter 45 relates the passionate reunion when Joseph made himself known, and forgave them for all the wrong they had done to him. He invited his brothers to bring their families and father Jacob to live in Egypt. The Egyptian Pharaoh gave permission for them to settle in the Goshen area. Thereafter, the descendants of Jacob's sons lived in Egypt for over four hundred years.

Jacob lived his last seventeen years in Egypt. Genesis 48:19 records how, during his last hours, Jacob bestowed special blessings upon the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, who were born in Egypt. The descendants of the elder son, Manasseh, would in future times become a great people, and the seed of Ephraim would become a multitude of nations.

The second important incident took place shortly before his death, as recorded in Genesis 49 when Jacob called his sons together to bless them, and told them what would become of their descendants during future times. In order of birth their names were; **Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (the 'seed-line'), Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin**. When Jacob gave his dying blessings to his sons, he associated each one with some animal, object, or some personal characteristic, which later became the emblem for that family, and their descendants, as a practical way to identify tribal ancestry for future generations. Tribal distinction was evident when the Israelite people left Egypt hundreds of years later, and before they had arrived in the land of Canaan where they settled in their respective territories. Moses later added additional items to these tribal emblems. (Deuteronomy 33)

It is well known that family emblems are still often used to our present day. Each Israelite tribe had an emblem, and by God's command these were already in use during their forty years of wandering in the desert after leaving Egypt. This is stated in Numbers 2:2 where we read that every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of his father's house. When reading all of Numbers chapter 2, we see that when not moving, the tribes encamped in a definite order around an open space. At the centre was an enclosure for the Tabernacle. The shape of the space is not stated in the Bible, although some scholars believe it to be square. Biblical descriptions state that God commanded the Israelite people to camp around the outside boundary in the following manner.

<b>North side</b>	Dan, Naphtali, Asher.
<b>South side</b>	Simeon, Reuben, Gad.
<b>East side</b>	Issachar, Zebulun, Judah.
<b>West side</b>	Manasseh, Ephraim, Benjamin.
<b>Centre area</b>	The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies which was a private sanctuary within the Tabernacle, situated in the centre area. The Priests and Levites occupied this centre area when encampment took place.

The Levites were descendants of Levi, a son of Jacob (who spoke to Simeon and Levi as one in Genesis 49:5-7). The Levites were set aside for the civil and religious service in the new nation of Israel to be, and were not allotted tribal land when in Canaan. Their duties required members of this tribe to live among the other tribes as needed. On map 2, you will notice that no territory was ever allotted under the name of Joseph. Instead, his descendants were divided into two tribes bearing the names of his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, both of whom were allotted territories in Canaan. Consequently, the blessing given to Joseph by his father Jacob, in Genesis 49:22-26, hundreds of years earlier, was in part inherited by these two tribes as time came to pass. Many years ago the following list of emblems was seen on a chart given to me and this included Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

- **Reuben**        A man.
- **Simeon**        A sword. Simeon and Levi, spoken to as one. (Gen. 49:5-7)
- **Judah**         A lion. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah. (**Note, 'seed-line'**)
- **Dan**             A serpent.
- **Naphtali**        A hind or stag let loose
- **Gad**             A leader of a troop, sometimes a number.
- **Asher**          A covered goblet.
- **Issachar**        An ass under a burden.
- **Zebulun**        A ship.
- **Manasseh**      An olive branch.
- **Ephraim**        An ox.
- **Benjamin**      A wolf

In section 31, I referred to God's '**seed-line**' promise in Genesis 3:15, and in section 14 Jacob's prophetic blessing to Judah in Genesis 49:8-10. These promises were fulfilled by Jesus. Following Israel's conquest of Canaan forty years after their departure from Egypt, we see twelve allotted territories on map 2. These are under the names of Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Manasseh, Ephraim and Benjamin. Remember how Jacob spoke to Simeon and Levi as one in Genesis 49:5-7, but Levi's tribal descendants had no territory when they settled in Canaan. Instead, as stated earlier, the Levites were given responsibilities relating to religious and civil duties required in this nation.

For many years, archaeologists have researched the origins of emblems (called a coat of arms) and their use in various nations throughout the centuries. They have also discovered secondary emblems applicable to the original ensigns used in Israel. Any additions would have been passed down during future generations. In section 28, I described the Assyrian exile of the northern kingdom (Israel) around 720 B.C, when few if any ever returned after it had then become re-populated with people from other nations and cultures. The Bible remains silent about the locations of their future habitations. Sections 29 and 30 dealt with the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah, which comprised mainly the Judah, Benjamin and Levi tribes. As you have read, many thousands returned to Judah seventy years later. During this time foreign people had also moved in. Some exiles remained in Babylon and numbers of these became dispersed throughout the Persian Empire and beyond. Others moved to Galilee and the Assyrian area. See map 4. To what extent these were united with the ten exiled northern Israel tribes is not exactly known, but it is clear that many descendants of the exiles from both kingdoms and who did not return, were scattered abroad in various directions.

Hundreds of years after these two exiles, James 1:1, writes about the twelve tribes who were scattered abroad and James certainly knew their descendants did not vanish. They had already migrated in all directions and naturally many of their descendants also moved westward. Evidence of this is indicated through the discovery of emblems in many western localities and applicable to their past use by the Israelite people and the present use of these with secondary emblems still commonly known today. The use of these inherited emblems with additions is also prominent in the Royal Heraldry of our western culture.

Names of many places indicate this as we look at Dan's emblem, for example, a serpent. Under some conditions a serpent leaves a trail. In the western hemisphere we see how names of nations, cities and rivers bear in part variations of Dan's name: **Dan-Den-Din-Don-Dun**. This is not a mere coincidence! An atlas shows names of **Danube, Sweden, Scandinavia, Denmark, London, Dunedin** and many other places with these also named after Israel's tribal emblems. Already in Amos 9:9 God said He would sift the House of Israel among the nations. To appreciate this we need to read from Genesis 17:1-9 when God made His everlasting covenant with Abraham who He chose to be the father of many people and nations. Again in Genesis 22:15-18 this covenant was complemented with God's promise that all nations would be blessed through the **huge number of descendants from Abraham's seed**. Most certainly this

related to God's promised **family 'seed-line'** within his future Israelite descendants to Jesus, but it must also apply to Abraham's descendants who were to be the carriers of God's Word with His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 10:6 and 15:24 Jesus said He came to save the lost House of Israel. When He spoke these words, the vast majority of these people had already been dispersed elsewhere (James 1:1). After the two exiles hundreds of years earlier as briefly outlined in sections 28 and 29, the land of promise was repopulated with foreign people. Their descendants remained among those of the descendants from the Judah, Benjamin and Levi tribes who had returned from Babylon. See section 30. Therefore during the ministry of Jesus there appeared to be many people of non-Israel descent living among the true Israelite people in Galilee and Judah who may have comprised a minority at this time. Many of these fled from the area years later when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. In general, people of the western nations share similar facial and other features which indicate a common ethnic origin. With other evidence beyond my scope of knowledge, many Bible students believe our western people are among the huge number of descendants promised to Abraham through God's Israelite people to be carriers of His Holy Word. **As future history unfolded, it came to pass that the western nations did become the main custodians responsible for proclaiming God's Word, however imperfectly on so many occasions.**

For further interest, we read Matthew 24 and Luke 21 where Jesus spoke in part about two major events to follow. He spoke of end times and judgment day, and of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, which lay in ruins after being destroyed by the Romans almost forty years later. This happened in 70 A.D. Jesus warned His true believers to heed the warning signs and flee from the area to escape the persecution and the bloodshed soon to follow. When Jesus spoke these warnings, the entire land of promise had already been under Roman domination since 63 B.C.

Map 2 shows the layout of tribal territories after the people had settled in Canaan, 1451 B.C. Map 5 shows the Palestine area many centuries before and during the time of Jesus who was speaking about Jerusalem in Judah. Bear in mind that during this era, a portion of Israelite tribes from Benjamin, Judah and Levi lived in Judah with people from other nations who had moved in after the Babylonian captivity hundreds of years earlier as stated in sections 29 and 30. These included the Medes, Persians and people from Edom directly south of Judah, and also others who had come in. Jesus did win some converts among these people but He warned that this nation was finished because the main body had not accepted Him as Lord and Saviour, and chose to reject Him nationally. Thereafter, as history tells us, the entire Palestine area lost the Word of God, and came under total godless domination.

To examine this more closely, we make the following comparison. Jesus later commissioned His small group of Galilean disciples to proclaim His message of salvation across the world. Soon after His ascension, these men were endowed with power from the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost when they were also suddenly able to speak in other languages. This special event also signified the future worldwide proclamation of salvation through Christ alone.

In contrast, sometime beforehand as stated in section 44, Jesus de-commissioned this unfaithful Judean nation with its proud highly educated false teachers who later on just before His crucifixion, yelled with the mob, *"His blood be on us and our children"*. They invoked this curse upon themselves, **so God gave them exactly what they asked for, and took His Word away from them!** Read Matthew 23 with emphasis on verse 38, and Matthew 27:25 to see what they asked for! These and their future followers continued to proclaim anti-Christ propaganda with other like-minded associates to our present day. Unless they repent and turn to Jesus Christ, they will remain God's enemies destined for eternal damnation in hell.

## **69. Conclusion.**

Many Christian authors have written well documented Bible commentaries useful for research and reference. They are to be commended for their intense study and dedication, and long may this continue. Of course, most people avoid reading hundreds of pages containing detailed information. With all due respect for these commentaries, I decided to briefly outline God's simple path through the Bible with its priceless gems of divine wisdom. I hope this will help readers become more acquainted with the



pattern and help them to find their way around through Scripture. These few reflections may interest you.

- Jesus, who is true God, was born into this world and became true man also through the Israelite people whom God had established in His own way by choosing Abraham who married his half-sister Sarah. His ancestors were idol worshippers (Joshua 24:2). His son, Isaac, married a close relative, as also did his son, Jacob. The vast number of descendants continued on from there.
- Their descendants became God's servant people to serve Him as carriers of His **promised 'seed-line'** and also carriers of His Holy Word, but not to dominate over others. This symbolised the attitude of Jesus who came to serve and not to be served. Those who claim Israelite ancestry must remember there is no such thing as a superior race. All nations who are entrusted with God's Word have a duty to proclaim it.
- Pride and false equality was the spark that started all sin.
- Secular history and archaeology continually uphold Bible truths.
- The Bible is a product of God's mind and written by men whom He inspired by the Holy Spirit who employed each writer's unique style of writing.
- Various authors have written books about women whom God chose for very important roles. For example, God chose Mary to give birth to Jesus who was conceived by the Holy Spirit as stated in Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:27-35. Her husband Joseph was merely the foster father, a role he accepted with great honour.
- The proclaiming of God's Word has encountered continued fierce opposition and persecution worldwide throughout the ages. Millions have become martyrs because of their Christian faith. The disciples also met with much opposition and frustration. Jesus also experienced this in His home town of Nazareth where many of His own people rejected Him. (Luke 4:28-30)
- God expects each of us to serve Him by proclaiming His salvation message through Christ's atonement for all sins, despite our human faults and many shortcomings. Remember how the Bible records the faults and mistakes made by God's chosen leaders who had weaknesses, and like us, were far from perfect. Notice how they also yielded to temptation when impatience and other passions took the upper hand. Let me quote several examples.
- **Noah:** On one occasion it so happened that Noah drank just a little bit too much wine (Genesis 9:20-21).
- **Abraham:** He acted prematurely because he seemed to doubt God's promise of a son from Sarah.
- **Jacob:** His twin brother was born first, but according to God's plan, Jacob was to inherit the birth right and blessing from his father Isaac, and not Esau who was the first-born twin (See Genesis 25:23). God would not have used deception as Jacob did when he lied to his father to get the blessings (See Genesis chapters 25-34 and 27:1-46). These actions backfired years later when he was deceived by his uncle, Laban, in Genesis 29:16-28 and was followed by family problems thereafter.
- **Moses:** To provide water, Moses struck the rock in anger and impatience, instead of speaking to it as God had commanded him (Numbers 20:1-13; 27:14).
- **King David:** He committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the soldier whom David then planned to have killed in battle (2 Samuel 11).
- **King Solomon:** He rejected God during the latter years of his reign and built altars for his many heathen wives who had become so much part of his life.

- On various occasions some of the New Testament disciples had disagreements. In some cases there were converts who drifted away from the truth.
- Men have always rebelled against God and brought His corrective judgments upon themselves and future generations, but our Lord forgives those who truly repent and has promised to support our weakness with His strength and guidance. Scripture emphasises these important truths.

1. **God's perfect creation of all that exists including mankind.**
2. **Man's fall into the bondage of sin that resulted in bodily and spiritual death.**
3. **God's promise of Jesus who redeemed our fallen human race from eternal damnation.**
4. **The fulfilment of this promise when Jesus atoned for our sins.**
5. **Full forgiveness is possible through Jesus alone, in whom we must have faith.**
6. **Our duty is to believe and proclaim repentance and this message of salvation until He returns at God's appointed time.**

## **Description of maps.**

These maps were included to guide you to see various changes throughout the centuries and how Bible history is closely related to the rising and falls of various nations in the Middle East region, shown on map 1.

### **Maps 2 and 5.**

#### **Galilee**

In general, the area of Galilee embraced the tribal territories of Zebulun and Naphtali in the northern part of the Israel nation already so named as Galilee in Joshua 20:7, after the Israel people settled in Canaan; 1451 B.C. The name continued during the reign of King Solomon hundreds of years later in 1 Kings 9:11, 2 Kings 15:29, and after his death. Galilee is also mentioned much later in Isaiah 9:1, and continued as such thereafter in Scripture. Worldwide, and even today, names still apply to various localities within nations and states. For example, in Victoria we have Gippsland, Wimmera, Mallee and the Western District.

Over the years internal and external politics dictated boundary changes to Galilee when parts of the former Issachar and Asher tribal territories were added. The city of Nazareth, where Joseph and Mary lived with the child Jesus, was part of the former Issachar tribal area in southern Galilee.

### **Map 3**

#### **Division of the Israel Kingdom.**

When King Solomon's kingdom was divided after his death, the ten tribes of the Israel kingdom in the north included the Galilee area. Meanwhile, the Judah and Benjamin tribes remained in the southern kingdom of Judah, with its boundary at the northern edge of the Benjamin tribal territory. Their city of Jerusalem lay several miles to the south of this boundary.

### **Map 4a**

#### **The ten tribes of the northern Israel kingdom were exiled about 720 B.C.**

After the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel were exiled to Assyria, Galilee became a foreign province. Next door to the south, Samaria also became a foreign province which separated Galilee from the southern kingdom of Judah. The rise, fall and conquests experienced by various empires set the political and religious scene for the birth of Jesus.

#### **The fall of Assyria.**

After the Assyrians exiled the ten northern Israel tribes about 720 B.C., their empire was later defeated by Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar who then controlled the entire Assyrian kingdom.

### **Map 4b**

#### **The Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah.**

About 130 years after the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria; Nebuchadnezzar's armies besieged Jerusalem and exiled what was left of the Judah, Benjamin and Levite tribes after many wars as stated in section 29.

## Map 4c

### Judah exiles in Babylon return to Judah after Babylon fell to Persia. 539

#### B.C.

God had planned their return from Babylon seventy years later. This was clearly stated in Jeremiah 25:11-12 and in chapter 29:10. Fifty years after this captivity and in 539 B.C, the Babylonian kingdom fell to the Persian Empire which then dominated all territories previously captured by Babylon and Assyria. Ezra 1:3 to 5 tells how King Cyrus decreed that all Judean exiles be permitted voluntary return to their former homeland of Judah. Ezra 2:64-65 says that over 49,000 returned in one wave of migration. Many chose to remain, and those who did not return later, became dispersed throughout the vast Medo-Persian Empire extending from Ethiopia to India, where they mixed with non-Israel people. Read about Esther in the Supplements of this booklet!

At some stage a portion of these Benjamin and Judah tribes migrated to Galilee, where Joseph and Mary later became their descendants living in Nazareth. It is often assumed others migrated north from Babylon to Persian controlled Assyria, where the ten tribes of Israel were exiled years earlier in 720 B.C. Clearly much of Israel was scattered abroad long before Jesus came.

The Holy Land area was controlled by the Persian Empire from about 523 B.C. to 332 B.C. The people of Judah were permitted to practice their religion without interference and encouraged to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple for worship (2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and also recorded in Ezra 1:1-4). Eventually Alexander the Great defeated Darius of Persia, bringing Greek rule to large areas of the Middle East region. After he died, Judah was ruled by other successors.

### The Romans take control of Palestine. 63 B.C.

In 63 B.C, Pompey of Rome conquered Palestine, which from then onwards was controlled by the Caesars. This led to Herod being the king of Judah when Jesus was born at Bethlehem. The people were now taxed and controlled by the Romans with their mixture of Hebrew, Roman and Greek culture where worldly humanism was prominent. We understand all of the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew except several passages here and there. Aramaic was the language understood by the people and spoken by Jesus during His ministry. The New Testament was written in Greek and was recognised as the language of that culture.

### Israel's inheritance lost.

We now take a brief look into past history when God delivered His Israelite people from their bondage in Egypt. Forty years later in 1451 B C, they entered Canaan; their land of inheritance God had promised to their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Future generations lived there for over 700 years until the Assyrians exiled the northern kingdom around 720 B.C., followed over 130 years later when Babylon exiled the southern kingdom of Judah. God had promised blessings for obedience and faithfulness to Him, but warnings of severe punishment for turning to false gods. As stated in the sections 28 and 29, these judgments came to pass because the people failed to heed these warnings and rejected their true God. **To our present day, so many are still slow to learn from history!** At the time of Jesus, the Holy Land was controlled by the Romans, and also occupied in part by foreign people who came in (especially after the Babylonian captivity), and lived among those of Israelite descent as I described in sections 28 to 30.

Canaan was a small area compared to Australia's State of Victoria, yet it became so prominent in world history. These Israelite people multiplied in huge numbers as God generously provided for their needs in their tiny country. For many years archaeologists have conducted intense research throughout the Middle East regions. They are convinced that people during those times had acquired immense knowledge, with the Israelite people possessing great competence and skill including worldwide ocean navigation. Much knowledge was lost during the latter dark ages when people were taught that the earth was flat.

Many ancient records have been lost through fires or other causes. Bible scholars have gleaned evidence from records still available. They believe that the entire Israelite population was not always necessarily confined to the Canaan area, but numbers of Jacob's descendants moved to more distant parts of the world as people have done from the beginning of time. Such natural migrations could have occurred long before the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles mentioned above, and especially during times when these wars were imminent. The Bible remains silent regarding these matters, but secular historical records are usually worthy of careful scrutiny.

Other ancient writings lead some researchers to believe Israel may have controlled other colonies not recorded in the Bible, and possibly during King Solomon's reign. They explain how this could have been possible, but when the Israelite kingdom collapsed, there would no longer be a national base because most of the twelve tribes were scattered abroad as stated in James 1:1. It is beyond my scope of knowledge to prove the existence of these former colonies where the discovery of emblems has been taken into account. Those who pursue this interesting research of ancient cultures will continue to verify the truth of biblical records with sufficient detail to follow the turbulent course of Israel's history. We give due credit to those who have co-operated with Scripture and recorded accurately defined dates for biblical time line charts.



# Supplements

## The Book of Esther.

The Bible records the names of numerous men and women whom God had chosen from various walks of life, to preserve His **family 'seed-line'** promise given to Eve in Genesis 3:15, for His plan to save our human race. He chose His servant people Israel to be the carriers of His Word, and the bearers of this **seed-line** which was fulfilled by Jesus 2,000 years ago. Special mention is also made regarding Esther, who lived around the 500 B.C. era over seventy years after her fellow Israelite tribes of Judah - Benjamin and Levi - were taken captive to Babylon in 586 B.C., and where many were still living at that time. An extraordinary course of events enabled Esther to bravely grasp an opportunity to plead for her people and save them from a plan for mass slaughter, devised by a man called Haman. His evil plan was abandoned, and Haman was put to death. To appreciate Esther's crucial role, the following review will help to set the scene. Landmarks in Bible history are often closely related to the rise and fall of various nations and empires in the Middle East region.

Several centuries earlier from that time, in 1451 B.C., Joshua had led his fellow Israelite people into Canaan, the land of inheritance promised to Abraham hundreds of years earlier for his descendants. God's **'seed-line'** pledge continued through Abraham and Sarah's son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, whose name God later changed to Israel. Their possession of Canaan marked the beginning of a long and turbulent history of this nation called Israel, also called the house of Jacob. Thus began a new era for about two million people after their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and followed by the possession of their promised inheritance of Canaan. God had now fulfilled this part of His plan for Israel, chosen to become His servant nation and the bearers of His **'seed-line'** promise. God assured them of His providence and protection if they remained faithful and obedient to Him, but He gave them severe warnings of punishment for turning to false gods. The end result would be national captivity and exile. Unfortunately, during the following centuries they often rejected God and turned to pagan worship. God sent corrective judgments to pull them back into line, but they soon slid back into their sinful idol worship.

We now move on several hundred years to the era when King David's son Solomon became the King over Israel from 1,015 B.C. to 975 B.C. King Solomon reigned from Jerusalem, where he built the famous temple to worship God. During his reign, Israel had reached the height of its national glory; but also the beginning of its tragic decline. During the latter part of his reign, corruption set in when Solomon became influenced by the practice of heathen worship that spread throughout the kingdom of Israel. After King Solomon's death the Israelite kingdom was divided (around 970 B.C.) with the ten tribes in the north becoming a separate kingdom, also called the House of Israel. The southern nation of Judah; the House of Judah, with Jerusalem as its capital, comprised mainly the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levites.

Idol worship continued in both kingdoms despite warnings from the prophets, and in general there remained only a small minority of faithful who believed in the true God. About 250 years after the division, the Northern Kingdom was punished for its idolatry as God had warned them so many times. The Assyrians from the north east invaded and exiled the entire population. Few if any ever returned. Their nation was then controlled by Assyria and repopulated with people from foreign areas. Some years later the Babylonians defeated Assyria and controlled their territories, including the former northern Israelite kingdom. Then about 135 years after the northern Israelite nation was exiled to Assyria, God's judgment fell upon the unfaithful Kingdom of Judah in the south. King Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian armies besieged Jerusalem, and after causing much devastation, destroyed the temple. Babylon then dominated this nation after taking the Judah, Benjamin and Levi tribes into exile. Needless to say, the faithful suffered with the unbelievers during these two tragic episodes which marked the end of these two kingdoms.

Some fifty years later around 539 B.C., the Babylonian Kingdom fell to the Persian Empire under King Cyrus, who had ascended the throne twenty years earlier, and who then dominated all territories previously captured by Babylon and Assyria. Ezra 1:3-5 states how King Cyrus decreed that the Judah, Benjamin and Levite exiles be granted voluntary return to their former homeland of Judah to rebuild

their temple, destroyed when the Babylonians invaded and devastated Jerusalem. Around the time of this captivity, we read the words from the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 25:11-12, and 29:10 where he said this captivity would last for seventy years. Soon after this decree from King Cyrus, some of the exiles started to return. Those choosing to stay were encouraged to contribute toward expenses and provisions for those people returning to Judah and also to give freewill offerings to help pay for rebuilding the temple. As strange as it may seem for these people under captivity, many prospered and acquired considerable amounts of wealth. Ezra 2:64-65 gives a figure of around 49,000 exiles who returned to Judah in one wave of migration. Many decided to stay, and those who did not return before that time or later, became dispersed throughout the vast Persian Empire from India to Ethiopia where they became absorbed among great numbers of non-Israelite people.

After that lengthy review where I attempted to outline the sequence of several major historical highlights, we now get back to the book of Esther. Chapter 1 records a series of events as these occurred prior to Esther's emergence into history. Her name first appears during the reign of the King Ahasuerus, as he is called in the book of Esther. He succeeded to the throne of Persia after King Cyrus. During the third year of his reign he arranged a great feast with celebrations in his palace in Shushan. He was now the proud ruler of his vast Medo-Persian Empire with 127 provinces extending from India to Ethiopia. Important officials and nobles from these provinces attended a huge display of wealth and self-glory associated with this huge kingdom. These extravagant celebrations continued for six months. This was followed by another seven days of feasts and festivity for the palace officials. The best wines were also served in abundance. Chapter 1:8 rather tactfully advised against excessive drinking, but instead be wise enough to know when to stop!

At this time Queen Vashti arranged a feast for the women who served in the palace. The King was also present with other men, but being a law unto himself, he drank to excess and was drunk on the final day. He commanded his servants to bring Queen Vashti to him so that the princes and other nobles could gaze at her beauty. Her common sense prevailed and she refused. The King was furious because her refusal to obey him challenged his supreme authority so he consulted his law officials as we read from verse 13-22. They advised him to banish Queen Vashti, otherwise women throughout the empire would be encouraged to disobey their husbands. Under Persian law and other heathen cultures, male dominance prevailed far beyond the extreme, **but this is certainly NOT the prominent issue in this story as all should know.**

It is clear how in common with many people who abuse their authority in any culture; this King was proud, lustful, arrogant, domineering and fully enjoyed his command of authority. After Vashti was banished from the royal scene, the King's anger cooled and he sorrowed over her loss. His servants suggested a search among the provinces to find other attractive young girls from whom to choose another Queen. The king approved of this suggestion. Esther was among the other girls brought to Shushan palace for the king to make his choice.

Esther was born an exile in the land of Persia. Her parents died when she was very young. Her cousin Mordecai adopted Esther into his family where she was regarded as a daughter. Both were aware of their Israelite Judean descent. Mordecai was well known as a descendant from Benjamin's tribe, and he occupied a position among the palace officials. Esther's identity was not generally known until this was revealed later. It can be stated that her intelligence and courage complemented her attractive appearance. When the girls were presented to the king, he chose Esther. She was crowned Queen with great splendour among the palace officials.

One day, while attending to palace duties, Mordecai heard how two guards were planning to assassinate the king. He passed this information on to Esther who informed the king. The plot was investigated and found to be correct, and the two men were executed. Mordecai's patriotic act was not rewarded at this time, but it was acknowledged later as you will see.

Chapter 3 continues by telling how the King appointed a man called Haman to the office of prime minister, thus making him the most powerful official next to himself. All of the king's officials were required to bow down to him with due reverence whenever he passed by. For some reason Mordecai despised Haman and refused to display this courtesy. Whenever questioned about this lack of reverence toward Haman, he simply said that it was because of his foreign descent from Judah and therefore not necessary for him to do so. Haman was furious over Mordecai's continual snubs, and vowed within



himself to destroy not only Mordecai, but also every man, woman and child of Israelite Judean descent throughout the Persian Empire. So intense was his hatred for this man.

Further to that, Haman cunningly devised his evil plan to totally destroy these people. When presenting his petition to the king, he carefully avoided the true secret behind his plot. Instead, he simply told the king that throughout his empire the foreign subjects were refusing to obey his laws. He convinced the king to issue a decree to completely destroy these Israelite-Judean people whose wealth could then be seized. Haman's success regarding the decree for this planned massacre could be attributed to his deception and bribery during his discussion with the king. This evil decree was then proclaimed throughout the vast Persian Empire.

Mordecai was horrified when hearing this news as so many others were when this proclamation was spread across to all Persian provinces. Chapter 4 tells how Queen Esther was unaware of this decree and asked her attendant Hatach to inquire why Mordecai was so distressed. Mordecai explained Haman's evil plan to Hatach and gave him a copy of the king's proclamation letter for Esther to read. He perceived that the only way to avoid this brutal massacre was for her to approach the king and plead for her people and beg him to cancel this evil decree. But there was a grave personal risk involved. According to Persian law, no one, not even the Queen, was allowed to approach the king for requests without permission. The penalty was certain death for the uninvited, unless the king chose to hold out the golden sceptre for the visitor to touch. The sceptre was a staff or rod symbolising royal power and authority. Esther had not approached the king for thirty days, nor had she been invited. She and Mordecai had exchanged several messages through Hatach, with each being aware of the urgency to make this appeal to the king.

Esther made her courageous decision to approach the king uninvited and plead for her people even if her attempt failed and meant death. Before attempting this role, she requested those around her to fast for three days, and neither eat nor drink. Chapter 5 continues this story, how after three days, Queen Esther bravely approached the king who, to her great relief, greeted her with the royal golden sceptre which she touched. She then knew the king had accepted her with pleasure and her life was no longer in danger. The king promised to hear her request. Esther's request was an invitation for the King and Haman to attend a banquet she had prepared for them that day, so they came along as invited. During the wine course, the King asked Esther what she really wanted. She replied, *"Come again tomorrow with Haman for another banquet, and I will explain my request."*

Haman left and arrived home with great joy, boasting to his wife and friends about his great wealth and the importance of his authority above everyone except the King. He also boasted that next day he was invited to attend another banquet with the King and Queen. Haman then also expressed his contempt for Mordecai who still refused to bow down to him.

His wife and friends suggested, *"Build a gallows seventy five feet high and ask the King to hang Mordecai on it, so then you can really enjoy the banquet."* This pleased Haman, who ordered the gallows to be built immediately. Chapter 6 is rather interesting! That night the King was troubled and could not sleep, so he commanded one of his servants to read to him some records of past events in his kingdom. There and then he was reminded of the occasion when two palace guards had conspired to kill him. This plot was exposed by Mordecai who had saved the King's life through his prompt action which had not been acknowledged. The King decided to give Mordecai's due reward immediate attention.

The next day Haman came to the palace, intending to ask the King to hang Mordecai on the gallows now built as ordered. The King was not aware of Haman's secret hatred for Mordecai or his intention to kill him, and may not have even known about the gallows already built. Instead he invited Haman to come in and immediately asked him, *"How can I best honour a man who pleases me?"* Haman thought to himself as being the greatest; *"Whom could he wish to honour more than me?"* He replied, *"Put the royal robes on this man and set him on the King's horse, then let the most noble prince lead him along the city streets calling out, "This is how the King honours those who please him."* The King said to Haman, *"Take these robes and my horse, and do this to Mordecai exactly as you have suggested!"* Haman had no choice. This was the King's command and he could not disobey. Haman put the royal robes on Mordecai and sat him on the horse which he led through the streets, calling out, ***"This is how the king honours those who please him!"*** That must have hurt Haman's feelings quite a bit!

After this episode, Mordecai returned to his duties, but Haman went home deeply humiliated for being compelled to exalt the man he hated so much. He related this degrading incident to his wife and friends who told how it could be impossible to destroy Mordecai. Meanwhile the King's messengers arrived to conduct Haman to the second banquet prepared by Esther.

**Chapter 7 records the climax regarding Esther's crucial role in history.** During the banquet and in the presence of Haman, the King asked Esther to make her request. Esther made her plea to save her people from Haman's evil plan for their destruction and exposed Haman as an enemy. She stated this with a few simple words in verses 3-6. Haman was terrified, knowing he was doomed when first realising Esther belonged to the people he had planned to destroy throughout all Persian provinces. The King arose in anger toward Haman and walked out into the palace garden. Haman began pleading with Esther to save his life. In despair he fell upon the couch where she lay, just as the King returned from the garden. In fierce anger, he condemned Haman to death, accusing him of attempting adultery with the Queen. As word spread around, one of the servants told the King about the gallows in the courtyard of Haman. The King said, "*Hang him on it!*" Haman was hung on the gallows he had intended for Mordecai. If you read from Esther 7:1-10, this tells the story much better than I can!

After Haman was put to death, several things happened as chapter 8 tells us.

- The King gave Haman's estate to Esther.
- Esther appointed her cousin Mordecai to administer Haman's estate.
- The king appointed Mordecai to the office of Prime Minister.
- Esther told the King that Mordecai was her cousin.

Esther's role was still not completed. Once more in chapter 8:3-6, she pleaded to the King to **send out a decree reversing the late Haman's order** for destruction of her people throughout the empire. In verses 7-17 the King consented and this saving decree was immediately sent out in all languages throughout the 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia where numbers of Israel's Judean exiles were living. This would have also included those who had already returned to the homeland of Judah, which was then still controlled by Persia years after the Babylonian captivity, 586 B.C. The King's decree gave Esther's people his permission to defend themselves against any enemies who chose to ignore this order. Bear in mind how racial suspicion has always existed. Bloodshed did occur as stated from chapter 9:5 onwards when Esther's people killed enemies including Haman's ten sons, who were also hung on gallows at Shushan. Future generations commemorated this victory with annual celebrations called Purim, meaning the throwing of a dice, as a reminder when Haman plotted to destroy all Judean exiles at a time determined by the throwing of a dice.

The book of Esther opens the way for much discussion about human behaviour and also how various cultures ruthlessly dominated the lives of many people except those at the top who were mostly a law unto themselves. Class distinction was evident as both males and females were exploited beyond the extreme and so often received raw treatment. Such discussions can sometimes be interesting, but we should avoid becoming side tracked away from the central issue relating to Queen Esther's role to expose Haman's evil plan for the destruction of her Judean-Israelite people. A brief biblical review is necessary to clarify several crucial points embracing God's plan and purpose for our human race.

God's first promise was already given in the Garden of Eden (4,000 B.C.) after Adam and Eve brought sin upon themselves and all future generations. In Genesis 3:15 God spoke of the Saviour to be born centuries later, through the family '**seed-line**' from Eve's descendants. Then almost 2,000 years later in Genesis chapter 12, He made a promise to Abraham, whom He chose to become the father of His servant people Israel, chosen to be the carriers of His Word and the bearers of His promised family '**seed-line**'. By linking these two promises, we see a continuous line of selected family '**seed-line**' descendants from within God's Israelite people. To illustrate this we return to where the line was first established through Seth, a son of Adam and Eve. From there I will list several names leaving gaps for others too numerous to mention here. We start from Seth,---generations later Noah,---his son Shem,---Abraham,---Isaac,---Jacob (Israel)---**Judah,---King David,---Solomon,---and the 'seed-line' kings who ruled over the Kingdom of Judah until its Babylonian captivity**--- many generations later---to Joseph and Mary the mother of Jesus. It is so clear how God had pledged the use of His Israelite people to bear the '**seed-line**' to Jesus who fulfilled this promise. **Now, read the last paragraph very carefully.**

We conclude this story with these necessary comments. Surely the devil would have rejoiced to see all of God's servant people exterminated, and especially the tribal descendants of Judah who had already received the '**seed-line**' blessing from his father Jacob in Genesis 49:10 many centuries earlier. This blessing was to continue because God does not break His promises. God's plan of salvation was not going to finish up on the rocks as Satan would have hoped when his evil servant Haman planned to destroy God's tribal people who were bearers of this important '**seed-line** **promise to be fulfilled by Jesus**'. Of course these long term implications did not concern Haman who probably knew nothing of this family line. His hatred was directed to Mordecai and the massacre of his people. God's name does not appear in early translations of Esther, but His hand is plainly seen as He chose Esther and endowed her with wisdom and courage to preserve His '**seed-line**' people from annihilation. Thus centuries later, Jesus fulfilled His Father's plan of redemption, being a true Israelite born from the promised '**seed-line**' through Judah. God's use of Esther to preserve His **family** '**seed-line**' people, is the central issue here, and is most certainly why her role deserved due prominence in a book written for special remembrance of her.



## The Book of Job

The remarkable story of Job's life has intrigued readers for centuries. Its authorship has sometimes been ascribed to Job, although some Bible scholars suggest parts could be the work of unnamed writers who complemented each other. However ancient the book may be, it was grouped together with other special sacred books of wisdom such as Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes written during the Old Testament era. The book of Job was respectfully accepted as part of Holy Scripture among God's servant Israelite people, who were the descendants of Abraham and Sarah.

Hundreds of years later, Job's life was characterised along with Noah and Daniel, as written by the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 14:14. In the New Testament, James also highlights Job as an excellent example of a man unsurpassed in righteousness and patience; James 5:11. In the first chapter of Job we read that he lived in the land of Uz, and its exact location is uncertain but various opinions have been offered. In his book of Lamentations 4:21, Jeremiah associates Uz with the land of Edom. This implies that this land received the name of Uz before the people of Edom entered it. These were the descendants of Esau, twin brother to Jacob, and a grandson of Abraham, so they only became known as a people many years later.

The land of Uz appears to have been near the region known as Edom and shown on maps somewhere south-west and south-east of the Dead Sea. Other opinions suggest areas extending further north-east or to the south-east. Until the matter can be settled, we leave these question marks behind us. The book of Job correctly describes him as a man who trusted in God and avoided evil. Read how God spoke about Job's life in chapter 1:8. He had been blessed with seven sons and three daughters. In addition, Job was a man of great wealth and prominence, renowned for his trust and obedience to God throughout the lands where his influence had due importance as we read from Job 29:25 and 31:37.

Chapters 1 and 2 reveal Job as a righteous man, and also describes the dialogue between God and Satan which resulted in the calamities God allowed Satan to inflict upon Job causing him loss of property and the death of his ten children. This was followed by intense bodily suffering. Let us remember that Satan was once a perfect angel but became God's enemy through rebellion and was cast out of heaven with other angels who also became evil and followed him; Jude 6. Ever since then, the devil has challenged God's supreme authority. The Bible describes him as the father of lies, the adversary, deceiver, the tempter and also as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. This incident marked the continuation of power struggles on Satan's part in his quest for total dominion in defiance of God's supremacy.

Here, God was challenged by Satan, who claimed that the only reason for Job's faith was because God had allowed him to prosper and become famous. Satan dared to accuse God of building a hedge of protection around Job, and then he added, *"If Job's possessions are destroyed, then he will curse you."* God met this challenge knowing the heart of Job as he does with each of us. He allowed the devil to destroy Job's earthly possessions but commanded him to spare Job's life. Job endured Satan's first attacks and also the final one when with God's permission Satan afflicted Job with painful sores causing him to endure intense bodily misery. Job was not aware of the satanic involvement causing these disasters, and he thought it was God who had put this misery upon him as we read in chapter 1:21. Despite this, throughout this time, Job's words confirmed his true faith and trust in God.

Job's four friends Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and especially Elihu, offered no worthwhile comfort, hence the well-known term: Job's comforter! Many times Job became weary of life, wishing he had died at birth instead of having to endure the tragic loss of his ten children and his property, then after all of that, he was afflicted with this physical misery. (Job 10:18-22) Any of us would have wished the same! After what could have been several months, we reach the climax when God healed Job and not only restored his health and possessions, but in addition gave him twice as much as he had owned before. God gave Job another 140 years of life during which time the past loss of his children was replaced with another seven sons and three daughters. God doubled His blessings to Job there also, because his first ten children had already been taken for God's heavenly kingdom and were not destroyed by Satan as were his other possessions.

When we take a careful look at these episodes during Job's life, it is necessary to reflect on circumstances often overlooked. In chapter 1:8 God describes Job as a righteous and upright man who pleased Him. There is no biblical evidence to suggest any intention on God's part to inflict such loss and misery upon a man who was renowned for his integrity and faithful service to the Lord. Job's influence was needed when people were drifting away from God just as they are now. With this challenge, Satan conspired to destroy Job's good name and also ridicule God's management of human affairs. Satan hoped to score a major victory during that era by attempting to use Job as an example of a prominent citizen who would reveal himself as a hypocrite, and curse God during times of great tribulation (Job 1:9-11).

Satan's evil plan failed as we read in Job 1:21-22 where it clearly states how Job's faith did not waver even when **he wrongly believed that God was responsible for his troubles by stating that the Lord took away**. Nevertheless he did reaffirm his total trust in God whilst being totally unaware of the satanic involvement causing these disasters. Verse 22 emphasises how Job never spoke against God, as we read again in chapter 2:9-10 after being afflicted with boils when his wife told him to curse God and die.

In chapter 3:25-26, Job said, *"The thing I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come upon me."* This does not necessarily imply any previous lack of faith on the part of Job as some may suggest. It simply states that on occasions before these disasters, Job would have experienced fear and anxiety through being aware of various potential dangers around him, whatever these could have been. Such fears are quite normal in this life, and even with those who trust in God. In this world of trouble it is normal for any true Christian to experience fear of the unknown, especially when dangers lurk nearby. This is part of our human nature when anxiety takes the upper hand in life's journey. The words **fear not and peace be unto you** appear many times throughout Scripture because God knows we live in a world so much dominated by fear. Therefore Job, righteous man as he was, also experienced fear just as we do.

During many chapters of this book, Job acknowledges his human weaknesses in true humility and repentance. In true faith he calls to God for forgiveness and help. In chapter 19:25 he said, *"I know that my Redeemer lives and will stand at the latter day upon the earth."* These words confirm his sincere belief in his Redeemer who will come at the appointed time during the future and proclaim His total victory over sin, death, Satan and hell. Of course Job was referring to Jesus, whose name was not used in that form during the Old Testament era of 4,000 years. Other words were used among those believing in God, and trusted in His promise of the Saviour who was still to come (Genesis 3:15). For example,

**Shiloh**            **Genesis 49:10.**

**Immanuel**       **Isaiah 7:14, meaning God with us.**

**The light**       **Isaiah 9:1-2.**

The name JESUS first appears in The New Testament in Matthew 1:1, and verses 20-25, when the angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream and said, *"Fear not to take Mary your wife for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit----and His name shall be called Jesus."*

Job's four friends offered him no comfort. Their self-styled counsel had so much to say but nothing to offer. They condemned him with accusations of secret sins which they claimed brought down these severe judgments from God. Their useless advice is recorded in these following chapters found in the book of Job.

Eliphaz spoke in chapters       4, 5, 15, and 22.

Bildad                                8, 18, and 25.

Zophar                               11, and 20.

Elihu                                 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36. (This fellow seemed to think he knew it all!)

Job's replies are found between these chapters. His past record was clear as God had already said in chapter 1:8. After these so-called spiritual advisers gave up on Job and left the scene, we read in chapters 38-41 how God spoke words of comfort to him, and declared His wisdom and glory by describing the marvels of His creation of the universe, and the world with all living creatures under His divine care and providence. Job quite easily related to this being previously aware of God's great love toward himself and all mankind. These words of comfort inspired him and in chapter 42 we read where

God healed Job and restored his possessions by giving him twice as much as he had owned before. Job's blessings included another ten children, plus an extra 140 years of life. He also experienced the joy of seeing his many great- grandchildren!

Worldly wisdom too often dares to question God's justice. People keep asking how we explain sin and suffering if such a God exists who is powerful enough to prevent all of this. Mankind tries to find the answer but we lack the knowledge to fathom the ways and mind of God. When Satan introduced sin, its virus spread worldwide and cannot be recaptured any more than smoke could be put back down a chimney. However powerful Satan may be, he cannot destroy Christ's work of redemption from sin's power over us. The Bible teaches how the devil conspires to deceive, maim, kill and destroy and also attempts to sow seeds of doubts in the minds of Christians. His evil power cannot equal God's Word which is more powerful than anything we can imagine.

God has bestowed upon us the authority to use His Word in the name of Jesus when the devil tempts us through false belief, despair and other cunning attempts to destroy our Christian faith. God's Word is our only sure protection against Satan who is God's enemy. Our faithful Almighty God promises He will not permit us to be tempted beyond our ability, but will make the way for our escape; 1 Corinthians 10:13. He invites us to call on Him at all times, especially during days of trouble. God is our refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1; 50:15). He is always close to us (Psalm 145:18-19). His loving assurance is clear throughout Scripture.

Suffering in itself, whatever the cause, is not a means of grace, because we cannot earn forgiveness of sins or salvation through suffering. Instead during such times we must look to Jesus, who is our only means of salvation. In John 10:9 Jesus says, *"I am the door; by me if any man enters in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."* Our Lord also speaks of himself again in John 3:16 where He says, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* In John 10:11 Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd. In Matthew 11:28 Jesus invites those who are heavy laden to come to Him for rest. Most certainly Jesus is the Good Shepherd whom Job believed in, just as we should, for comfort and healing.





## Supplement to Evolution (From Section 66)

The Bible does not teach any form of evolution which is often based on scientific speculation used to support baseless mindset beliefs. It has a pagan origin and is fully supported by those with atheistic beliefs and who deny the existence of God. Unfortunately there are also Christians who lean toward some form of divinely guided evolution rather than accept the inspired words of God in Genesis, also supported in other parts of Holy Scripture. These people struggle to accept the six day creation account so clearly stated in the first chapters of Genesis. They never question the numbers of days or years relating to other Bible events such as the flood and the 400 years of Israel's bondage in Egypt or other events relating to periods of times as defined in days or years. Others say there is disharmony between the first and second chapters of Genesis and also falsely claim that no one can exactly define how to interpret their true meanings. God always invites us to search His Scriptures, so let us carefully examine these two chapters starting first with Genesis chapter one. It is also equally important to examine chapter two. Only then can we truly appreciate this perfect harmony when these chapters are studied together and see how they truly complement each other. We start from Genesis 1:1.

### 1. THE FIRST DAY

Genesis 1:1-5 teaches how in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The earth was without form and void; quite empty with no life and in total darkness. Both Hebrews 11:3 and Psalm 33:6-9 emphasise this was created out of nothing by God's command. In verse 3 God said, "*Let there be light,*" and there was light. God divided this from the dark and called the light day, and the darkness He called night. Verse 5 tells us the evening and the morning formed the first day. God had already created light before He made the sun on the fourth day. As you read through this first chapter, take special notice how God carefully numbered each identical day with His words; the evening and the morning to define the completion of each day's work. God remembers every detail!

### 2. THE SECOND DAY

Genesis 1:6-8. God arranged His creation for further progress on His carefully planned agenda. Thus the evening and the morning were the second day.

### 3. THE THIRD DAY

Genesis 1:9-13. Here we see more preparation steps as God separated the waters from the earth and made dry land appear where He commanded the earth to bring forth grass, herbs and trees with all of these yielding seed after their kind for future generations of life. He gave no command to transfer to other types of living species.

### 4. THE FOURTH DAY

Genesis 1:14-19. God made the sun, moon and stars to come into being for their specific functions as these verses teach us. Remember how both day and night, and light, were already created on the first day in preparation for the sun now made to fulfil its role to rule the days thereafter.

### 5. THE FIFTH DAY

Genesis 1:20-23. God now commanded the waters to bring forth living creatures. He created GREAT whales and other marine life, and also birds that immediately flew above the earth, and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply **after their kind!** The evening and the morning were the fifth day.

### 6. THE SIXTH DAY

Genesis 1:24-31. God commanded the earth to bring forth other creatures such as cattle and other animals and creeping things to multiply after their kind. On that same day God also made the man and the woman, but in a special way as described and distinct from all other creatures over which God had given man dominion. Man was made in God's image and without sin, but this does not mean having equality with God. He bestowed upon us the

special gift of intelligence and many useful attributes not given to other living creatures. God also intended human beings to enjoy a unique relationship with Him as not bestowed upon other living creatures. We learn from Genesis 3 how sin spoilt this close relationship, but this is a separate issue quite apart from the false teaching of evolution.

7. God made Adam and Eve as mature adults and we read about this in Genesis 2:24. They could speak on the day God made them so there was no need to grow up first! All living things were mature, whether plants, birds or other creatures as God commanded them to come forth and eat the green grass He had called into being on the third day, as seen in Genesis 1:9-13 and spoken of by God in Genesis 1:30-31. The first generation of life was in place and God said it was to be continued. All components in God's newly created universe were already following their divinely guided orbits but not in haphazard directions as the result of some fictitious big bang! The density of the atmosphere was already perfect to sustain life and allow birds to fly through the air with sufficient oxygen for all of us to breath. Evolution cannot explain how this became possible.
8. Genesis 2:1-3 records the completion of God's creation and His day of rest on the seventh day which He sanctified as His Holy day. In Genesis 2:4, God reflects on His first day of creation (Genesis 1:1-5) when He first created light and declared the first day. As stated above, all other identical days passed as He completed His agenda to create and maintain all life on earth, then finally humans who were to be the purpose of His creation. In chapter 2 God described some essential steps as employed during the past days of His creation. Before God called plant life into being as He did on the third day in Genesis 1:11-13, the land was dry and needed water because He had not sent any moisture from above. We read about this in Genesis 2:5, so verse 6 tells us how the land was watered. In paragraph 11 we read on from verse 8 to see what else happened on the third day.
9. Now back to Genesis 1:11-13 where God had already commanded the earth to bring forth all plant life yielding seed to produce after their kind. God commanded this to occur only after He had prepared the soil with water. In Genesis 1:28-29 when God was speaking to Adam and Eve, He showed them the trees laden with fruit for them to eat and the green vegetation already grown to feed all living creatures. This is clearly stated in these two verses.
10. Genesis 2:7 describes God's formation of Adam who became alive when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. God then placed Adam into the Garden of Eden already prepared for him to dress and keep in order, with due warnings not to eat from the tree of forbidden fruit. On the sixth day God also made the woman (Genesis 1:27) and also described how He did this in Genesis 2:21-25.
11. Now we take a final look at Genesis 1:9-13 where it states how God divided the land from the water which He calls the sea. Without doubt He also arranged the rivers as written about in Genesis 2:10-14 when He also created grass on the third day and planted His Garden of Eden spoken of in Genesis 2:8-9. This had already been done before God made Adam on the sixth day, and then took him to this garden established three days earlier. This garden was already there and no one can dispute that.
12. If we take God at His Word, there is no conflict between the first two chapters of Genesis. The sequence of creation events relating to God's six day creation account is perfectly clear. Extra volumes of biblical detail may never satisfy the demands of men who keep asking more pointless questions. God's literal account is clearly given for us to accept. It is hard to understand why even some Christians lean toward any form of evolution when Scripture does not teach this. God settled all arguments in Exodus 20:11. Why attempt to spoil His account with useless speculations which create more problems than they pretend to solve? Do these people believe evolution will help guide us to a more sincere repentance and faith in Jesus our Saviour? The devil fully supports all beliefs in evolution because he knows that Genesis is the foundation of the Bible which he also knows is truth, but his knowledge cannot help him. He has deceived millions of people with his lies and deceptive compromise. God's inspired Word is fully trustworthy at all times. Many people still deny the existence of God (Psalm 14:1).

## **Other Comments**

### **The Psalms**

Following on from the book of Job are the Psalms written by various people including King David who was a musician and composer. Some were written by Moses who lived many years before David. The first chapter almost says it all. The Psalms are still used as written, and often a basis for hymns of praise and prayers to God. This book is a gem of wisdom where every mood or feeling may be brought before God. There we find sorrow, anger, anxiety, calm, faith, feelings of doubt, struggles of the present and hope for the future.

### **Proverbs**

The book of Proverbs is attributed to King Solomon and other writers. Here-in is contained Divine wisdom and other excellent advice including discipline, justice and much more.

### **Ecclesiastes**

This book attempts to analyse life's problems and puzzles, and the futility of human wisdom. It directs us away from this and points us to God.

### **The Book of Ruth**

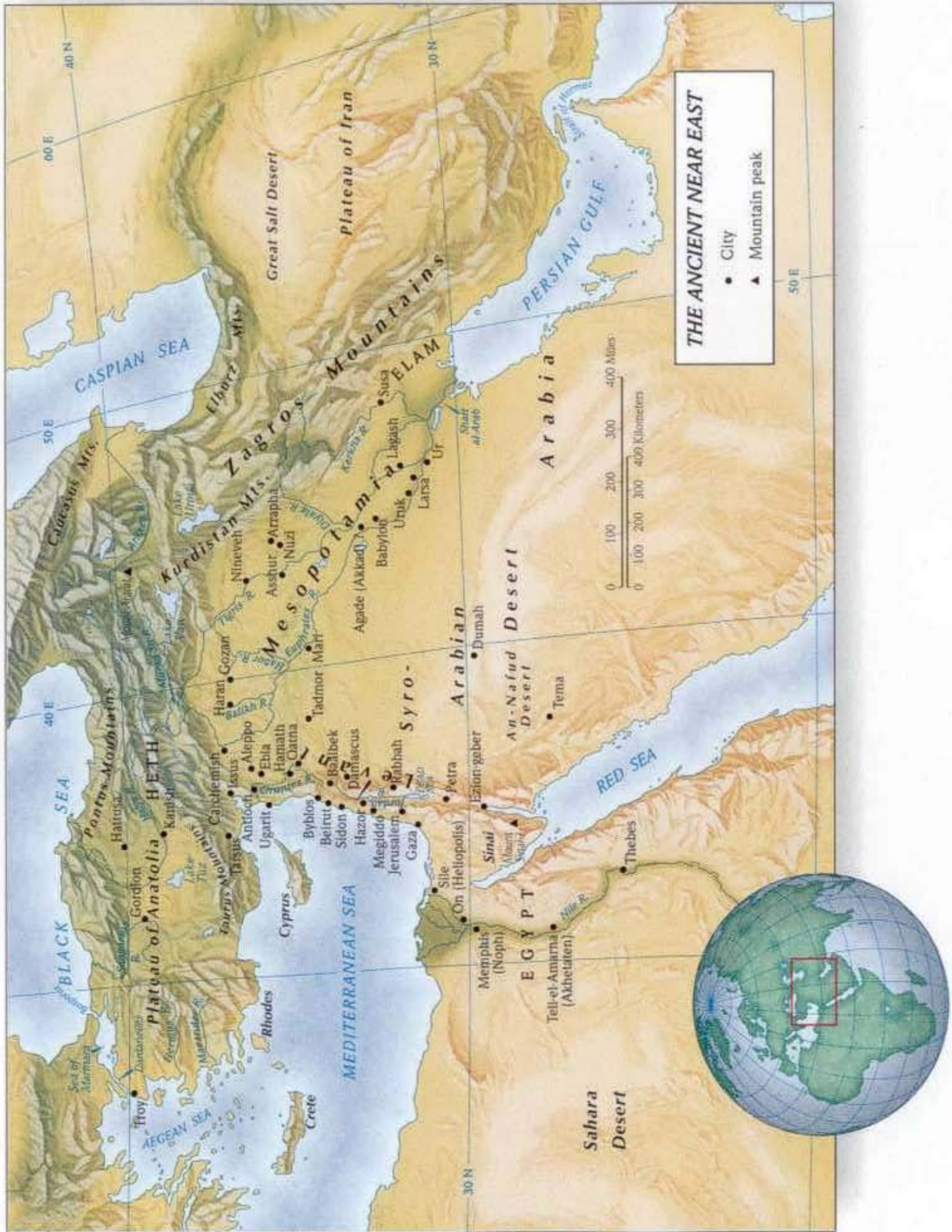
The book of Ruth is another literary masterpiece, worthy of careful reading. This story of Ruth's life displays great love, faith and kindness during times of deep sadness and tribulation, and teaches how God can reward acts of genuine compassion. Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David and lived during the latter time of the Judges who ruled Israel.

### **The Book of Esther**

This book is about Queen Esther who saved her Judah people from the mass slaughter.

# Appendix

## Map 1



Middle East area. Showing Egypt and Canaan referred to in Section 2. Also some places mentioned on other maps and sections.

## Map 2



The twelve tribal territories allotted after the people of Israel entered the promised land of Canaan. Referred to in section 21.

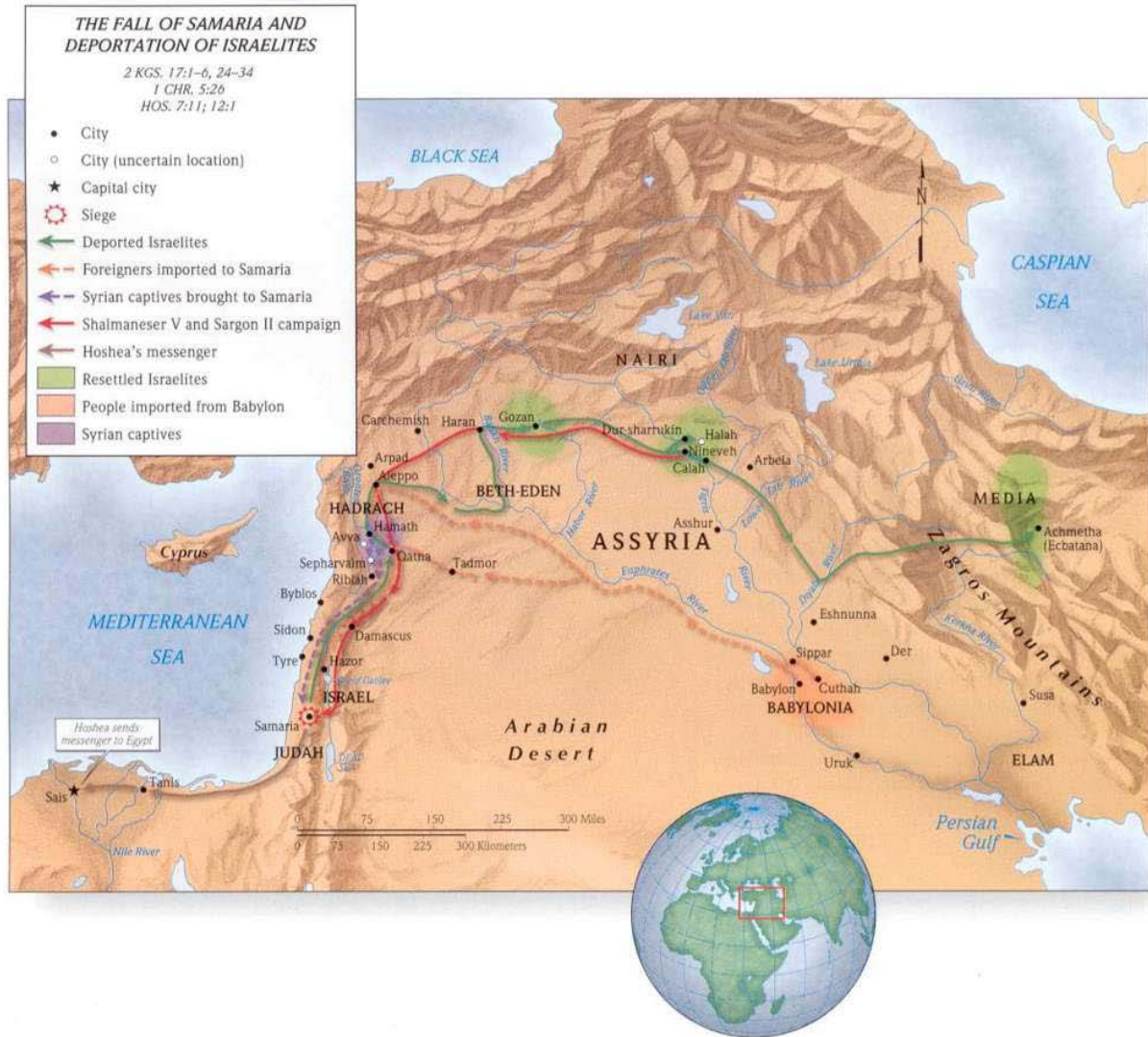
### Map 3



#### ISRAEL DIVIDED, AFTER THE DEATH OF SOLOMON (Section 26)

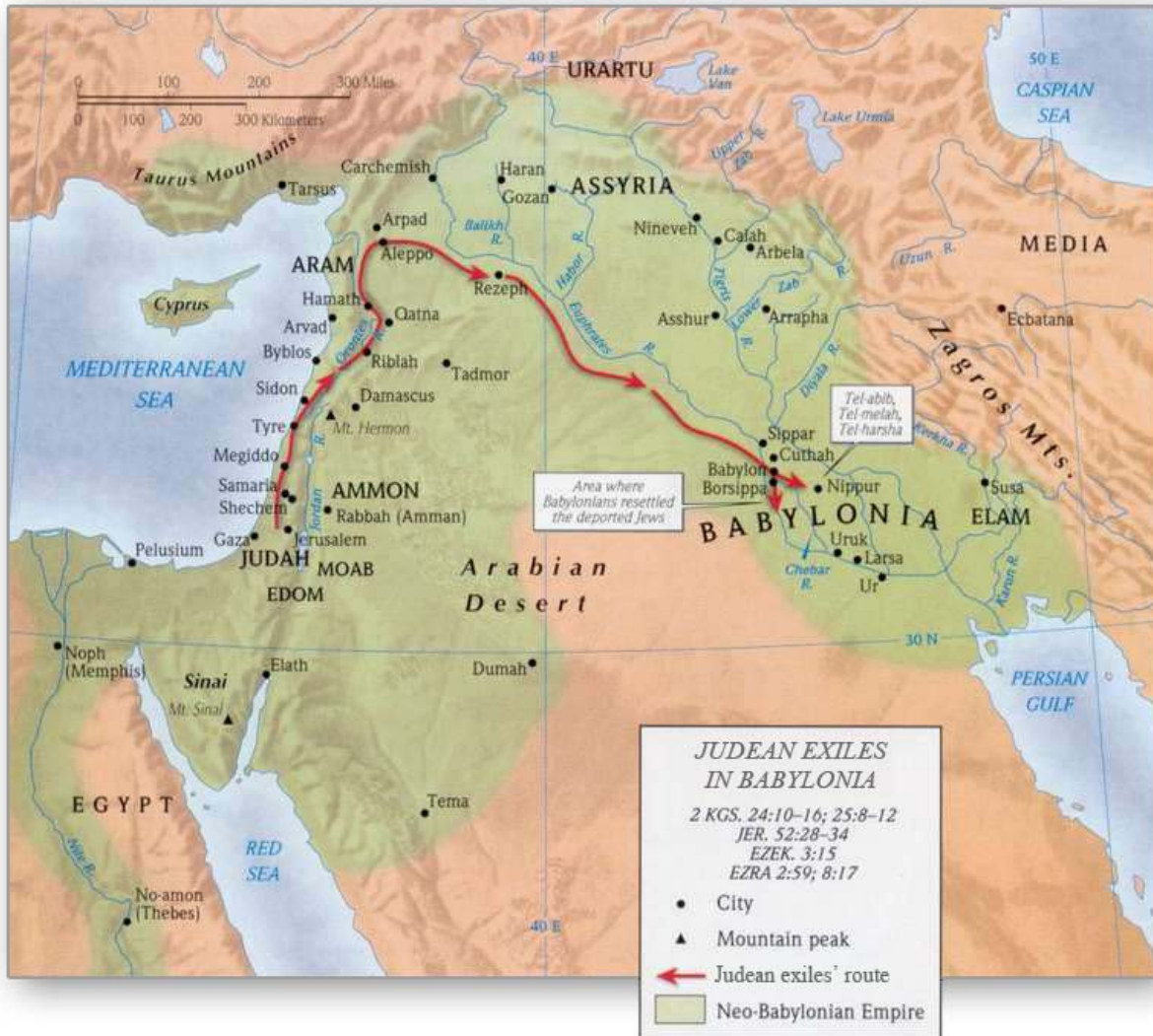
After the division, it was mainly the Judah and Benjamin tribes with some Levites who remained in Judah. The Simeon tribes south of Judah joined the other nine tribes. Later these were also exiled by Assyria because they were part of the Northern Israel Kingdom, thus making a total of ten tribes captured soon after 720 B.C. (Section 28)

## Map 4a



Ten tribes of Israel exiled to Assyria in 720 B.C. Which included Simeon tribes, south of Judah. Few, if any, returned. Referred to in section 28.

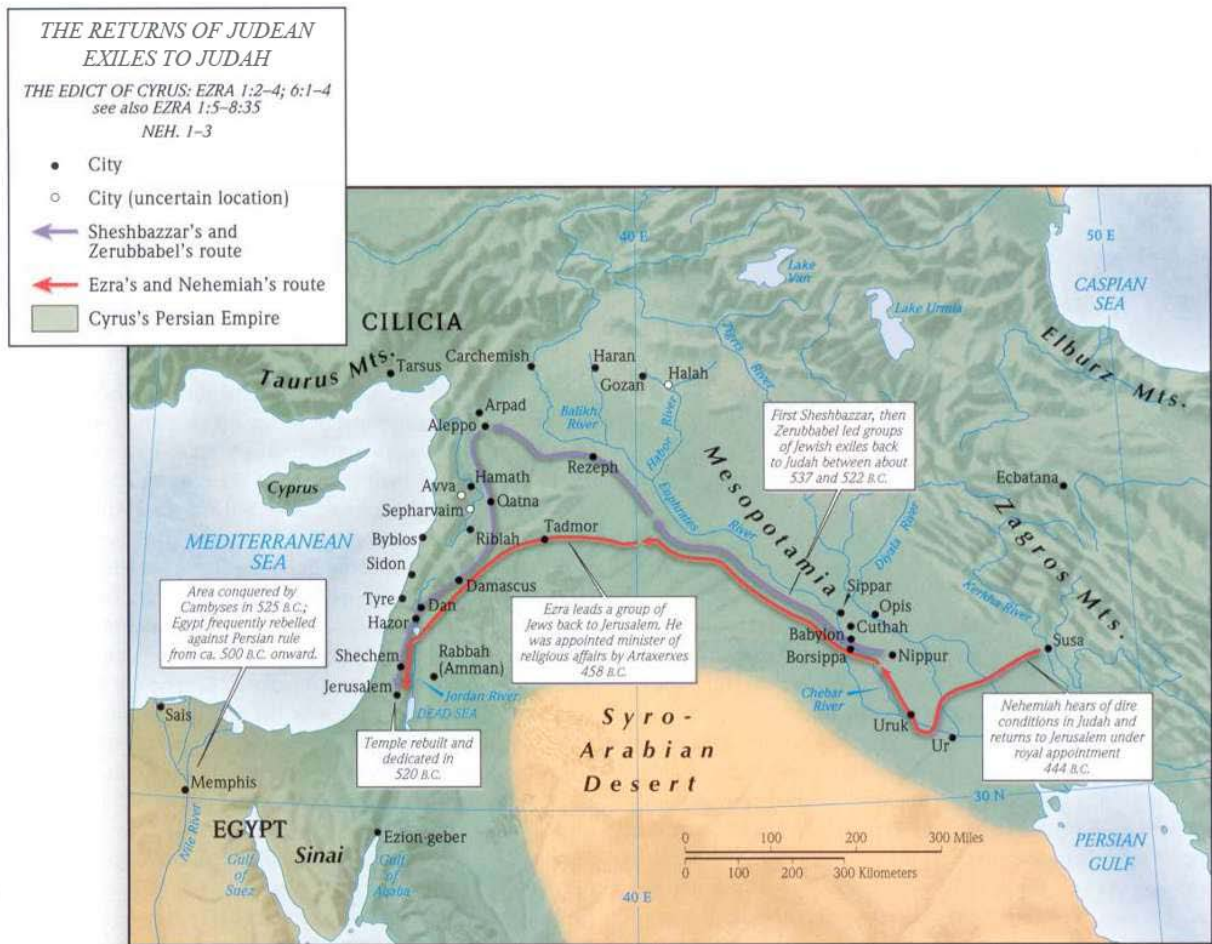
## Map 4b



Southern nation of Judah, comprising Benjamin and Judah tribes with some Levites, exiled to Babylon about 130 years later. Referred to in section 29.

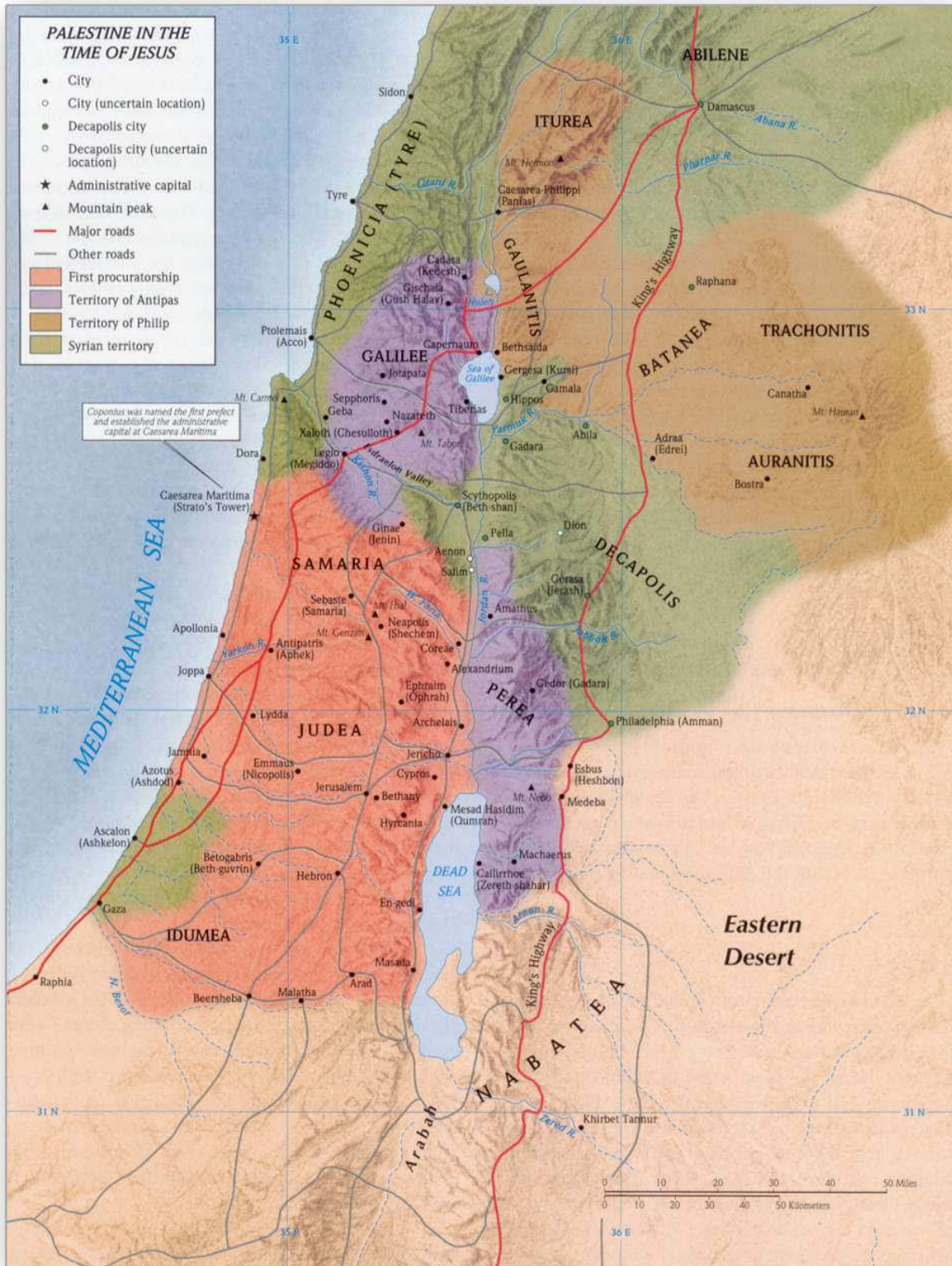


## Map 4c



Seventy years later, some of the exiles began returning to Judah following King Cyrus's decree permitting voluntary return. This was accomplished in three separate expeditions. During one of these over 49,000 travelled back to Judah. Many decided to stay, and large numbers who did not return later, became dispersed throughout the vast Medo-Persian Empire, extending from India to Ethiopia. At some stage a portion also settled in the Province of Galilee. See section 70.

# Map 5



Palestine area during the time of Jesus.