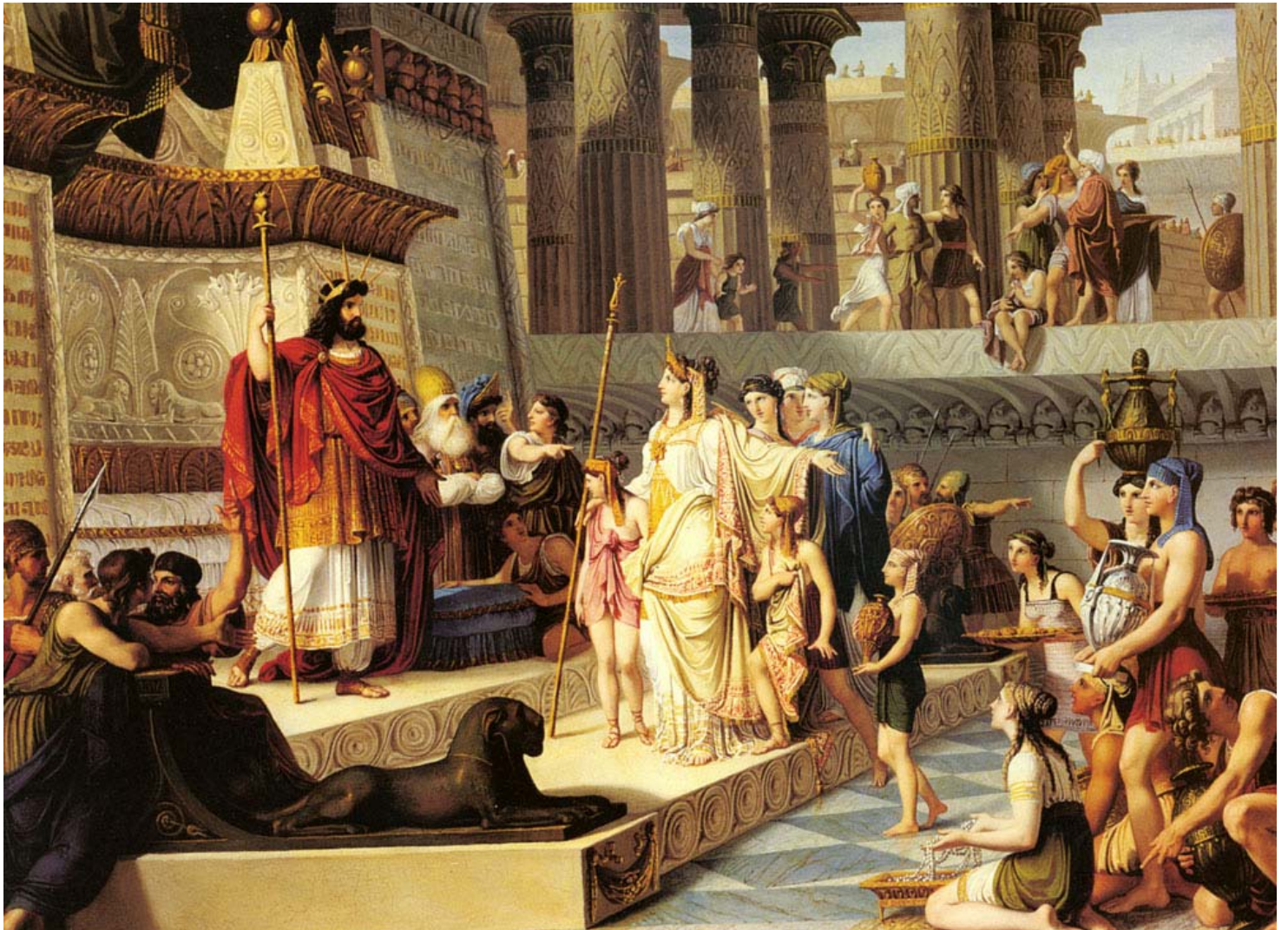


THE BIG JOURNEY

from Creation
to New Creation



nine ► From Solomon to the Coming Saviour



'Solomon and the Queen of Sheba' painted by Giovanni Demin (1789-1859).

Solomon, God's man of rest

Solomon's accession (around **970BC**) ushers Israel into a unique period of peace and prosperity. God gives Solomon phenomenal wealth and fame (see 1 Kings 3.13). His empire (mapped out in 1 Kings 4.21,24-25, see also 1 Kings 8.65, 2 Chronicles 7.8) stretches from the upper Euphrates to Egypt's border – the extent of the land that God promised Abraham (Genesis 15.18). God's people live without hunger or enemy attack (see 1 Kings 4.20 and 4.24-25).

“Wiser than all other men”

When Solomon becomes king, God invites him to ask for anything he wants. Rather than riches and reputation, Solomon requests wisdom so he can “*discern between good and evil*” (1 Kings 3.9).

That phrase “*good and evil*” reminds us of a tree in the Garden of Eden - “*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” (Genesis 2.17). The Hebrew words for “*good*” and “*evil*” in 1 Kings 3.9 and Genesis 2.17 are identical.

God is pleased that Solomon wants to “*discern between good and evil*”, and He grants Solomon's request. But He had forbidden Adam and Eve from having the knowledge of good and evil. So God seems to allow Solomon something He had denied to Adam and Eve. Why was this?

Adam and Eve were fresh from their Creator's hands. They were like children; they needed training and discipline. God was going to teach them to trust Him and walk with Him, to see things as *He* saw them, to see what was *really* good and evil. For them, to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good

and evil was to say to God, “No, we won’t trust You and learn from You; we’ll decide for ourselves what’s good for us and what’s bad for us”.

But that isn’t Solomon’s attitude. He doesn’t ask for the power to discern good and evil so he can rule God’s nation just as he thinks best, like a petty despot. He wants *God* to show him how to speak and act in response to all the problems and circumstances he will face as king (see Proverbs 8.14-16). Solomon pictures Adam ‘come of age’, mature. So God gives him the knowledge of good and evil – God shows Solomon what’s good and evil in *His* eyes. Now Solomon can rule his domain with *God’s* wisdom.

God grants his request (1 Kings 3.10-12) and Solomon becomes “*wiser than all other men*” (1 Kings 4.30-31). People come from far and wide to hear him (1 Kings 4.34, 10.23-25). The Queen of Sheba presents him with her most perplexing mysteries - and he solves them all (1 Kings 10.1-13)! He composes 3,000 proverbs and 1005 songs (1 Kings 4.32); two of the Psalms are ascribed to him (Psalms 72 and 127). The Song of Solomon, ascribed to Solomon, explores the deepest and most wonderful mystery of human life - “*the way of a man with a young woman*” (Proverbs 30.19 NIV, and compare Genesis 2.21-24). Solomon is the principal author of the Book of Proverbs, and he inspires the Book of Ecclesiastes. These two books teach us how to think and live in this fallen world.

Solomon is a new Adam. He governs God’s paradise with wisdom and understanding, fulfilling the role God originally mapped out for mankind (see Genesis 1.26,28). He explores God’s creation, speaking about its plants and animals (1 Kings 4.33) - reminding us of Adam naming the animals in the Garden (Genesis 2.19-20).

A new Sabbath rest

Solomon’s name in Hebrew (*Shelōmōh*) is related to the familiar Hebrew word *shalom*, which denotes wholeness, harmony, wellbeing, fulfilment, peace.

The Bible connects Solomon’s name with ‘rest’. His father David told him how God had said to him, “... *a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days*” (1 Chronicles 22.9). The Hebrew root verb for rest here is *nûach* (the name ‘Noah’ is a derivative of this word). It means ‘settle’, ‘take a rest’.

‘Rest’ is a key theme in the Bible. When God finished creating the universe, He rested - everything was just as He wanted it. Adam and Eve walked in fellowship with Him; they loved each other; they ruled God’s paradise with wisdom and care. There was perfect harmony in the Garden of Eden. But sin shattered that harmony. Sin sowed discord and conflict - between mankind and God, between man and woman, between brother and brother, and between humanity and nature. And with discord and conflict comes *unrest* - stress and distress, pain and toil, frustration and fruitlessness.

So right through the Bible, we see God working step by step to bring His creation back to rest. He foreshadowed it in the Sabbath days and years, and the Year of Jubilee. And now, after David has completed the conquest, the Promised Land enjoys rest – war is now over.

Now Solomon, the man of rest, rules over a nation at rest, peaceful and secure (1 Kings 4.24-25, 5.4, 8.56, 1 Chronicles 22.9). The curse is being pushed back:

► The fruitful land rewards those that till the ground, as 1 Kings 4.20 suggests (compare Genesis 3.17-19).

► Pain in childbearing is eclipsed by the joy of bearing children and raising them in a land where there is safety from enemies, good government and enough to eat (see Genesis 3.16 and compare Psalm 127.3-5). Israel is as many as the sand on the seashore - just as God promised Abraham (1 Kings 3.8, 4.20, and compare Genesis 15.5, 22.17) – and fulfilling mankind’s original creational blessing (Genesis 1.28).



Image © hoyasmeg / James Emery : Flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)
Sheep in Nazareth village, Israel. God brought His people into “*a land flowing with milk and honey*” (Exodus 3.8). Milk was produced from sheep, goats and (to a lesser extent) cows. The land’s rich pasturage enabled the nation’s flocks and herds to yield an abundant supply of milk.

Solomon’s Temple

God’s nation was at rest. Now was the time for God Himself to find a place of rest among His people. God had said to David, “*I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling*” (2 Samuel 7.6 NIV). So Solomon built a permanent Temple where God could rest (see 2 Chronicles 6.1-2,41, and compare 2 Samuel 7.12-13).

He sited it on Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3.1). This was just to the north of the main city area – and almost certainly the mountain where Abraham sacrificed Isaac (see Genesis 22.2). The Temple, together with its furnishings and utensils, are described in 1 Kings 6.2-10,15-36, 7.13-51, 2 Chronicles 3.3-5.1. God gave David the design (1 Chronicles 28.11-19). No expense was spared. This building was to be “*of great magnificence and fame and splendour in the sight*

of all the nations” (1 Chronicles 22.5 NIV).

God’s garden sanctuary

The Temple’s basic plan is like the Tabernacle’s, with its outer courtyard, Holy Place, and Most Holy Place where the Ark of the Covenant was. But it’s much bigger and more splendid than the Tabernacle. And whereas the Tabernacle’s beauty was inward; the Temple is beautiful both inside and outside. A great porch guards its entrance, flanked by two tall pillars. The Tabernacle had a single basin in its courtyard; the Temple has an enormous bronze basin supported on twelve bulls, plus ten smaller water basins on wheeled stands. The Tabernacle had one golden lampstand or menorah; the Temple has ten.

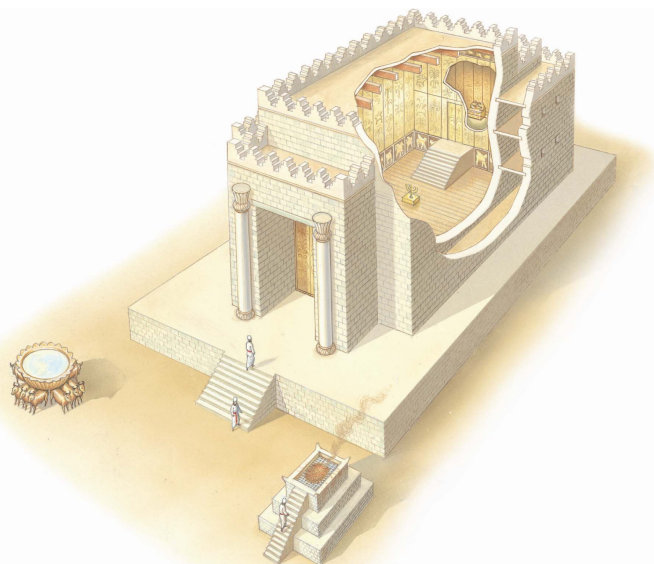


Image © 2004 Lion Hudson plc/Tim Dowley & Peter Wyart trading as Three's Company

An artist's drawing of the Temple, with cutaways to reveal the interior. In the courtyard was the altar and the bronze basin or "sea" (the ten smaller water basins with their stands aren't shown). Inside the Holy Place stood ten lampstands and the table of showbread (not shown), plus the altar of incense (probably placed where the single lampstand is shown). The steps in the Holy Place led up to doors and a veil (it's not certain whether the veil was inside or outside the doors). Behind these was the Most Holy Place, inside which was the Ark of the Covenant (this is shown).

The Tabernacle was a new Garden of Eden. So is the Temple. It's decorated with trees, flowers and fruit, and with cherubim (who guarded the first garden). The capitals on top of the two bronze pillars flanking the porch are sculpted in the form of lilies and adorned with pomegranates - reminding us of a pair of fruit trees. Inside, the Temple is adorned with gourds and flowers, cherubim, and palm trees. In the courtyard outside, the rim of the huge basin is like a lily-blossom; under its rim it's decorated with gourds. Lions, oxen and cherubim adorn the stands for the ten smaller basins. The Most Holy Place houses two huge cherubim (as well as those on the Ark of the Covenant itself), their wings outstretched as if they are protecting God's throne.

When all is complete, Solomon assembles the elders of Israel at Jerusalem and dedicates the Temple (1 Kings 8.1-66, 2 Chronicles 5.2-7.10). The Ark of the Covenant is brought into the Most Holy Place. This magnificent ceremony marks the very pinnacle of Israel's history. God's glory-cloud fills the Temple (1 Kings 8.10-11, 2 Chronicles 5.13-14) and He takes up residence there, just as He did in the Tabernacle (Exodus 40.34-35).

The Temple, like the Tabernacle, was God's royal palace. Its Most Holy Place was His throne room; and the Ark of the Covenant with its mercy seat was the footstool of His throne (see 1 Chronicles 28.2). From above the mercy seat between the cherubim, God reigned over Israel and over the whole Earth.

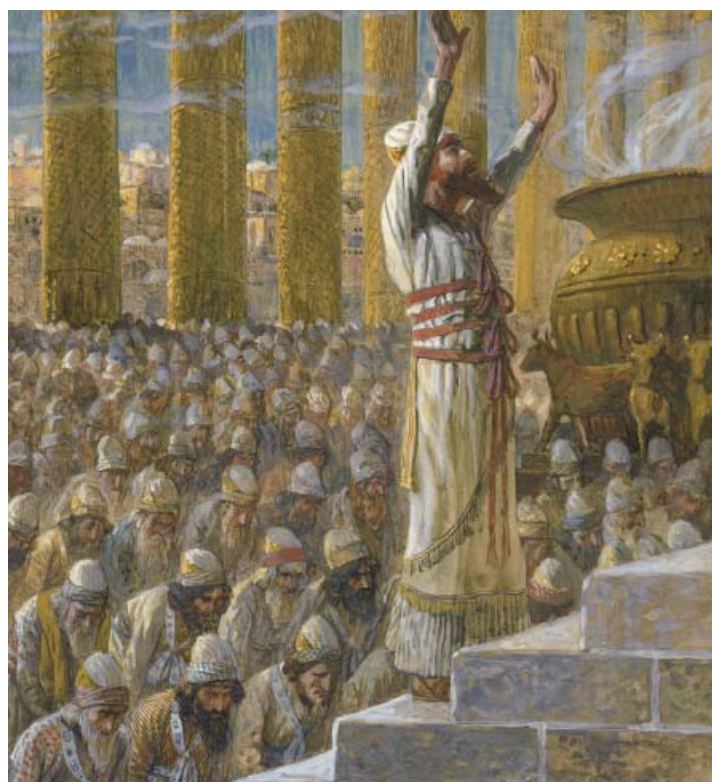
Zion, God's holy mountain

The Temple mount - Mount Moriah - became known as Mount Zion. Zion was one of the names of the original Jebusite fortress that David captured and made his capital. Later it was used as a name for the whole city of Jerusalem or for the Temple mount, the dwelling place of God.

Mount Zion was God's "holy mountain" (Joel 3.17, Zechariah 8.3), the place where heaven touched Earth. That mountain was crowned with God's Temple. From this Temple, God ruled His Kingdom on Earth. It was "a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56.7, see Mark 11.17 and parallels at Matthew 21.13, Luke 19.46), a place where the prayer of the foreigner could be heard and answered, "in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel" (1 Kings 8.43). In Stephen Dempster's words: "On this cosmic mountain Solomon has constructed . . . a conduit of blessing to the entire world . . ."

Here is God's answer to Babel (Genesis 11.1-9). Babel was a city with a mountain - the Tower of Babel. Jerusalem was a city with a mountain, too - Mount Zion. Babel's tower was crowned by a temple; Jerusalem's Mount Zion was crowned by a temple. Babel was man's counterfeit city, built by human power for human glory; its tower was topped by a temple for false gods. But now God has come to live in His Temple on His mountain in His city.

This is a key moment in God's plan to rescue creation from Satan's domination. He has been acting in history to create a people for Himself and a paradise where He can live with them for ever. Now, under Solomon's rule, God once again has a paradise - the choicest place on this planet - where He lives among His people. At the Temple's dedication, Solomon says: "Praise be to the LORD, . . . Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses." (1 Kings 8.56 NIV). In Vaughan Roberts' words: "It looks now as if all the promises of God have been fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come."



'Solomon Dedicates the Temple at Jerusalem' painted by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) or followers (The Jewish Museum, New York).

Foot Note The end of the Exodus!

The writer of 1 Kings solemnly records that Solomon began to build the Temple in the 480th year after the Exodus (1 Kings 6.1). The building of the Temple is the final step in Israel's Exodus and conquest of the Promised Land. In R.E. Watts' words, God's "presence at the dedication of the temple . . . marks the culmination of the Exodus . . ." The history of God's people over those long centuries led up to this moment. This was what God had longed for - to be at home among His people in His paradise.

Israel's mission – blessing the world

We've seen that whenever God makes a home in His creation, He appoints stewards to look after it and to worship and serve Him there. This is a priestly and kingly role.

As priests, Adam and Eve were to serve God and worship Him in the Garden of Eden. As kings they were to be God's vice-regents, having dominion over every living creature (Genesis 1.26,28) and ruling the Earth on His behalf. Adam and his family were to subdue the Earth, care for it, explore it, discover and unlock its resources and make it a wonderful paradise.

Israel was God's new humanity. Just as mankind was originally appointed to be priests and kings on Earth, so Israel was to be *"a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"* (Exodus 19.3-6). Like the first man and woman, Israel was to serve God and worship Him as His priests in the garden – the Promised Land. As God's vice-regents, they were to rule the land on God's behalf, cultivating it, using its abundant resources, and developing a rich and godly civilisation in it.

Israel was to be the Kingdom of God in miniature - foreshadowing what God planned for the whole world.



Image © vad_levin : Flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

A scene in the southern Golan Heights. In the distance can be seen part of the Sea of Galilee. Taken in April, when the land is still green from the rains, this paradise is near the geographical centre of Solomon's empire.

The land of Israel was God's bridgehead into a world under Satan's domination. David had completed the conquest, and that bridgehead was now secured. What was God's strategy for advance?

1 God's people were to be His ambassadors

Israel was to reveal God to the nations (see 1 Kings 8.59-60; compare Isaiah 43.21 and 1 Peter 2.9). As Michael D. Williams tells us, "Rather than send his evangelists and witnesses out to the far-flung corners of the earth, as he does in New Testament times, God set a mission station in the midst of the nations for all to see." They were to be a light to the nations.

Through their feasts and sacrifices, through their Law (see Deuteronomy 4.6-8), through the ordered peace and wellbeing of the nation and the beauty and fruitfulness of their land, Israel would teach the pagan nations around. They would demonstrate what God was really like - not unclean, cruel and capricious like their own gods, but holy, trustworthy and kind.

As Michael Williams explains, God "intended Israel to function like a spiritual magnet, attracting other nations to him through its witness to God." Solomon's wisdom, which God gave him, drew Gentiles (1 Kings 4.34, 10.23-25). When his Temple was dedicated, this king prayed *"when a foreigner, . . . comes from a far country for your name's sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays towards this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you"*. (1 Kings 8.41-43). Jesus Himself said, as He cleansed the Temple: *"Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'?"* (Mark 11.17, quoting Isaiah 56.7).

2 Israel was to show what mankind was called to be

In William Dumbrell's words, God called Israel to be *"the model for the world"*. They were to be, as John Durham explains, *"a display-people, a showcase to the world of how being in covenant with Yahweh changes a people."*

In their politics and economics, in their culture and technology, in their family and tribal relationships, God's people would show the nations what God had called mankind to be.

And because Israel was at the crossroads of the world – on trade routes linking Europe, Asia and Africa - people from many surrounding nations would pass through the land and see and experience God's blessing on Israel for themselves. Some might even find themselves settling there.

3 Gentiles could share the blessings of God's people

Gentiles who came to live in the Promised Land could share in its blessings. God's people were to love these immigrants (Leviticus 19.33-34), and provide for them (see Leviticus 19.9-10 and Deuteronomy 14.28-29).

4 Gentiles could become part of God's people

Moreover, Gentiles could actually become members of God's covenant people. Joseph married the daughter of an Egyptian priest and fathered Ephraim and Manasseh by her (Genesis 41.45,50-52). Immigrants and purchased slaves could be circumcised, become 'one of the family' and eat the Passover (Exodus 12.48-49). Faithful spy Caleb was a Kennizite (Joshua 14.6), an Edomite family tracing their descent from Esau (1 Chronicles 1.35-36). Ruth was a Moabitess (Ruth 1.22); Uriah (David's warrior whose wife he stole) was a Hittite (2 Samuel 11.3).

5 God's people were to lend to the nations

Out of its prosperity, Israel could lend to many nations (Deuteronomy 15.6). It would, in Peter Craigie's words *"become a major mercantile state, wealthy enough to lend to other nations"* – and so be a blessing to them and not a burden.

Israel was poised to bring paradise blessing to the world. In Stephen Dempster's words, Israel represents *"a new humanity . . . which is destined to restore creation blessing to the world."*

Keeping the promises to Abraham

At this moment in His people's history, God is fulfilling His promises to Abraham in a wonderful new way:

(1) **He promised them a land** – now they are in that land! Its borders stretched from the upper Euphrates to Egypt's border - the land that God promised Abraham (Genesis 15.18-21).

(2) **He promised Abraham that he'd father a great nation.** Israel is as many as the sand on the seashore, just as God promised.

(3) **And He promised Abraham that in him all the families of the Earth would find blessing** (Genesis 12.3). In the different ways we see above, Israel, the seed of Abraham, was beginning to be a blessing to the nations around. One day, of course, those promises to Abraham would be fulfilled in an even greater way, as we shall see later in our journey. But this time in Israel's history was a glorious foretaste of what was to come.



Image © B. Simpson / Cairocamels : Wikimedia (CC BY 3.0)
 God brought His people into *"a land flowing with milk and honey"* (Exodus 3.8). There was honey from bees (see Judges 14.8, 1 Samuel 14.25-26) – the abundant flowers provided ample food for bees. But honey may also refer to syrup produced from grapes, dates, figs and carob fruit. The early historian Josephus wrote of "many sorts of palm trees" near Jericho "the better sort of them, when they are pressed, yield an excellent kind of honey, not much inferior in sweetness to other honey". The fruit-laden crown of a date palm is depicted above.

Downfall and division

But the battle with Satan isn't over - he wants to overrun God's paradise and destroy God's people. And very quickly, it all goes wrong again.

God had told His people what their kings should be like (Deuteronomy 17.14-20). The king was to write a copy of God's Law and *"it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, . . ."* (Deuteronomy 17.19). He wasn't to acquire lots of horses (used primarily for chariots and cavalry). He wasn't to have many wives or amass great stores of gold. Power, women and wealth - these are a man's three key temptations. Rich and powerful as he was, Solomon was bound to be fearfully tempted in all three ways. He fell for every one.

Solomon amassed stupendous quantities of gold (1 Kings 10.14). He *"gathered together chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen"* (1 Kings 10.26,28-29). He married 700 wives, many from the idolatrous nations around, whom God had expressly forbidden Israelites to marry (1 Kings 11.1-3). Not content with them, he gathered 300 concubines, too! These women led him into idolatry (1 Kings 11.3-8, Nehemiah 13.26) and set a downward course that ended ultimately in expulsion from the land - just as Adam and Eve's sin led to their expulsion from paradise.

If their time in the wilderness was Israel's childhood, and the dark period of the Judges was their early adult years, then the reign of Solomon is like their midlife crisis - a crisis they pass through not in victory, but with dishonour. So the Lord determines to punish Solomon by tearing the kingdom in two after his death (1 Kings 11.9-13,26-40). Even during his reign, the peace of his kingdom was crumbling (see 1 Kings 11.14-26).

Revolt

Solomon burdened his people through taxation to supply his royal court, and through conscripted labour (1 Kings 4.7,5.13-17). When his son Rehoboam succeeds to the throne, the people petition him to lighten their load (1 Kings 12.3-4). But Rehoboam says he'll make their burden even heavier (1 Kings 12.6-15).

This is the trigger for rebellion. Ten tribes, under the leadership of Jeroboam, revolt against Rehoboam and set

up their own kingdom (1 Kings 12.16-24) - this is around **930BC**. But God has caused all this to happen because of Solomon's sin.

Jeroboam's kingdom is called Israel; its capital is firstly at Shechem, then later at Samaria. Rehoboam's kingdom is called Judah, and his capital is Jerusalem. He rules over the tribes of Judah (his own tribe) and Benjamin (see 1 Kings 12.21). There were members of other tribes in his kingdom, too. There were priests and Levites who lived in the Levitical cities in the southern kingdom. There were also, it seems, folk from the tribe of Simeon, whose tribal lands lay largely if not wholly within Judah's territory. And 2 Chronicles 11.13-17 tells us that faithful priests and Levites, plus other loyal folk from the northern tribes, also defected to Judah.



Map copyright © 2006 MANNA www.biblemaps.com
 The kingdoms of Israel and Judah, around 925BC.

A new Canaan

To discourage people from straying outside his kingdom to worship God at Jerusalem, Jeroboam sets up golden calves at Dan and Bethel - just like Aaron did at Mount Sinai (1 Kings 12.26-33; see Exodus 32.1-6). Israel ends up in gross idolatry (see 2 Kings 17.7-17). Dynasty follows dynasty, and king after king walks in Jeroboam's evil ways (for example, 1 Kings 16.2,25, 22.52, 2 Kings 13.2, 14.24). Israel never has a single godly ruler.

Ahab (reigns **874-853BC**) is worse than any king who reigned before him (1 Kings 16.30-33). He sets up a temple for Baal in his capital Samaria, and marries Jezebel. She was

from Sidon, a city of Phoenicia (compare Genesis 10.15). Gordon Wenham tells us that “**The Phoenicians certainly regarded themselves as Canaanites.**” Jezebel, in Peter Leithart’s words, “**is thoroughly Canaanite**”. During Ahab’s reign, Hiel rebuilds Jericho, the first and key city captured by Joshua. But God wanted Jericho never to be rebuilt (1 Kings 16.34 and see Joshua 6.26). The conquest is being reversed. The Promised Land is becoming Canaan again.

Moses and Joshua again

But God doesn’t leave Himself without witness in these dark days. He has His prophets. Two of them, Elijah and Elisha (active around **870-852BC** and **852-795BC** respectively) are rather like Moses and Joshua. Elijah brings God’s victory against Baal worship on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18.17-40); the people proclaim God as Lord; Baal’s priests are slain. That slaughter parallels what Moses did at the foot of another mountain centuries before (Exodus 32.25-28).

And Elisha is like Joshua. Elisha is Elijah’s servant and successor, as Joshua was to Moses. Like Joshua, Elisha’s first act is to cross Jordan (2 Kings 2.13-14). Like Joshua, he clears the land of Canaanite Baal-worship - he anoints Jehu as king to destroy Ahab’s idolatrous dynasty and slay Jezebel. Jehu sets enthusiastically to his task (killing Judah’s king Ahaziah, too - he was Ahab’s grandson). Then he slaughters the Baal worshippers. Jehu’s campaign is recorded in 2 Kings 9.1-10.28.



Image © Stevenj / Steven G. Johnson : Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, a Neo-Assyrian bas-relief sculpture from Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), in northern Iraq. It commemorates the deeds of Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria (reigned 858-824 BC). The panel shown includes the earliest depiction of an Israelite yet discovered - Jehu, king of Israel. It describes how Jehu brought or sent his tribute to the Assyrian king in or around 841 BC. The caption above the scene, written in Assyrian cuneiform, can be translated: “The tribute of Jehu, son of Omri: I received from him silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase with pointed bottom, golden tumblers, golden buckets, tin, a staff for a king [and] spears.”

Elisha is like another Joshua, too – he’s like Jesus (the Hebrew ‘Joshua’ and the Greek ‘Jesus’ are variants of the same name). Like Jesus, Elisha goes about ridding the land of the curse, conquering death, hunger and disease. Like Jesus, he raises a widow’s son (2 Kings 4.18-37, see Luke 7.11-17), feeds a multitude (2 Kings 4.42-44, see Matthew 14.15-21, 15.32-38 and parallels) and cleanses a leper (2 Kings 5.1-19, see Matthew 8.2-4 and parallels, Luke 17.12-19).

The end of Israel

But in the end, Jehu (around **841-813BC**) is like the other kings of Israel (2 Kings 10.29-31). Israel’s idolatry continues unbroken to the end. God, in His love and grace, speaks to them through Amos (around **760BC**) and Hosea (around **760-722BC**). Jonah (who prophesied perhaps around **760BC**), too, was from Israel. God sends him to Nineveh, a principal city of Assyria, and a nation soon to be Israel’s conquerors. Unlike Israel, they repent!

Our merciful God waits as long as He can before allowing the final blow to fall (see 2 Kings 13.23). But in the end, there is no remedy. Israel’s rebellion and wickedness is incorrigible. Israel as an independent nation is finally extinguished at the siege of Samaria in **722BC** (2 Kings 17.5-41, 18.9-12). The Assyrians deport many Israelites into other parts of their empire and resettle Gentiles in the cities of Samaria, displacing the Israelites who lived there. Some of the Israelites may have already fled to Judah or to foreign lands to escape the Assyrian onslaught. But some Israelites remained. Israel becomes just another part of the Assyrian Empire.

The southern kingdom, little Judah, is left to withstand the Assyrian juggernaut. It includes the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, together with many, if not most, of the priests and Levites; plus remnants of the other ten tribes of Israel.

When did members of the other tribes come to be part of Judah? Many priests and Levites already lived in the Levitical cities of the southern kingdom. Simeon’s tribal lands lay within Judah and eventually became assimilated into Judah (though some Simeonites may have occupied land outside Judah, too).

At the division of the kingdom, faithful priests and Levites living in the Levitical cities in the ten northern tribes left their lands and houses and defected to Judah, as did other faithful folk from the northern tribes themselves (2 Chronicles 11.13-17).

We know that more God-fearing folk from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon deserted to Judah during Asa’s reign (2 Chronicles 15.9). And some Israelites may have fled to Judah to escape the Assyrian onslaught.

And a few were faithful to God even within the northern kingdom after their conquest by Assyria. Hezekiah invited Israelites from Beersheba right up to Dan in the north to celebrate a Passover (2 Chronicles 30.5-11), and some from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun responded; the idolatrous places in Ephraim and Manasseh as well as the southern kingdom were destroyed (2 Chronicles 31.1). Josiah’s reforms embraced “**the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali**” (2 Chronicles 34.6 and see 34.33) – at that time the Assyrian Empire was disintegrating, and Josiah may have extended Judah’s boundary northwards to embrace some of the northern kingdom.

So the ‘the ten lost tribes’ is a myth. Even after the Exile, the Bible still speaks of “**all Israel**” (for example, Ezra 2.70 ESV margin, Ezra 6.17) and “**our twelve tribes**” (Acts 26.7).



Map copyright © 2006 MANNA www.biblemaps.com

The Assyrian Empire.

Judah's journey to judgment

Unlike Israel, Judah has some good kings, especially Hezekiah and Josiah. But there are bad kings, too, and time and time again the nation falls into idolatry. But despite their sin, God keeps His promise to preserve David's dynasty (see for example 1 Kings 15.4-5, 2 Kings 8.19). None of Israel's dynasties lasts very long. But in Judah, David's dynasty rules throughout the nation's history, except for one brief interlude.

Infiltration from Israel

That brief and shocking interlude comes around 90 years after the division. King Jehoram (**848-841BC**) marries Athaliah, the daughter of Israel's notorious king Ahab (2 Kings 8.16-18). King Jehu of Israel kills their evil son, Ahaziah, during his slaughter of Ahab's family (2 Kings 9.27-28). But Ahab's family aren't so easily dislodged from Judah. After Ahaziah's death, his mother Athaliah seizes the throne and reigns for six years (**841-835BC**). Ahab's daughter is on Judah's throne! And to secure the throne, she tries to destroy all the legitimate Davidic heirs in an act of mass murder (2 Kings 11.1). This is Satan's attempt to destroy David's dynasty - and the Seed of David, Jesus Himself.

But baby Joash is saved; one day he's proclaimed king and Athaliah is slain (2 Kings 11.2-16). Joash (**835-796BC**) begins well. He repairs the Temple (2 Kings 12.4-16, 2 Chronicles 24.4-14). But the nation later falls into idolatry (2 Kings 12.3, 2 Chronicles 24.17-22). They get a taste of what's to come; the Syrians plunder the land, kill the leaders and wound Joash. Joel may possibly have prophesied during Joash's reign (though a variety of dates from the 9th to the 2nd centuries BC have been proposed - the time of the Assyrian invasion of 701 BC or the Babylonian invasions of 598 or 588 BC are plausible dates).

Revival and reversion

The two best kings of Judah - Hezekiah and Josiah - reign much later on in Judah's history. Hezekiah (around **715-687BC**) becomes king a few years after the fall of the northern kingdom. His story is told in 2 Kings 18.1-20.21, 2 Chronicles 29.1-32.33 and Isaiah 36.1-39.8. He purges the land from idolatry, cleanses the Temple, restores the worship of God and keeps a Passover. During his reign, Isaiah (active around **740-700BC**) and Micah (active around **740-687BC**) prophesy, and Hezekiah pays heed (2 Kings 19.1-7, 20-34, 20.1-19, Jeremiah 26.18-19).

In Hezekiah's 14th year, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invades Judah. He captures the fortified cities of Judah and threatens Jerusalem itself. In the famous Sennacherib Prism, this mighty king boasts that: "As for Hezekiah, the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small cities in their neighbourhood, which were without number, . . . I besieged and took (those cities). 200,150 people, . . . horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep, without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil." Then Sennacherib handed over the towns and villages he'd seized to vassal Philistine kings. This is a foretaste of the Babylonian incursions a century later.



Image © Dcastor / David Castor : Wikimedia
The Taylor Prism (held in the British Museum) recording the annals of the Assyrian king Sennacherib. It's notable for describing his siege of Jerusalem during the reign of King Hezekiah. There are three known complete examples of this inscription, and the three are nearly identical. The Taylor and Jerusalem Prisms were written in 691 BC and the Sennacherib Prism in 689 BC. The prisms each contain six paragraphs of Akkadian written in cuneiform. They are hexagonal in shape, made of red baked clay, and stand about 380mm high by 140mm wide. Text from the Sennacherib Prism is quoted on this page.

But Hezekiah trusts God and prays. And God assures him through Isaiah that He will save His city (2 Kings 19.20-34). The angel of the Lord slays 185,000 Assyrian troops overnight. Sennacherib never takes Jerusalem.

Later on, however, Hezekiah entertains a delegation from the king of Babylon and shows them all his treasures and armoury. He was doubtless ready to cement an alliance with them against Assyria, rather than trusting in God. So Isaiah tells him that one day Babylon will do what Assyria did not do. Babylon will take Jerusalem.

And everything that Hezekiah had done to restore the nation is undone by his son Manasseh. In Peter Leithart's words: "Manasseh is the Ahab of the Southern Kingdom". This king did horrible things. *"For he rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshipped all the host of heaven and served them. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, 'In Jerusalem will I put my name.' And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with wizards. Manasseh led them astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel."* (2 Kings 21:3-6,9). Manasseh even sets up pagan altars and images of Asherah (a Canaanite goddess) right in God's house.

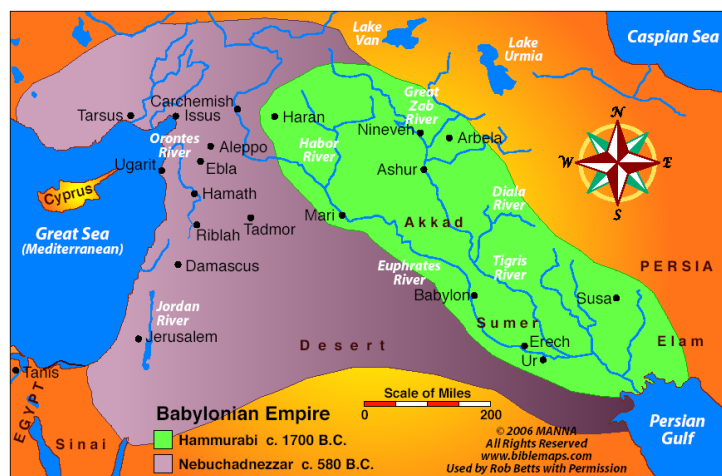
Judah has become a Canaan again (2 Kings 21:1-9, 2 Chronicles 33:1-9). Judah is sinning like Israel, so God will judge them like Israel (2 Kings 21:10-15). Israel has long since fallen to the Assyrians; now they come for Judah. They capture Manasseh and take him to Babylon, controlled at that time by Assyria (2 Chronicles 33:11). It's another foretaste of the Babylonian captivity.

Exiled and afflicted, Manasseh repents (2 Chronicles 33:12-17). But Judah's sins have taken them beyond the point of no return (see 2 Kings 23:26-27, 24:3-4).

Even great King Josiah's reforms can only afford a stay of execution. Josiah (640-609BC) is the greatest of the kings of Judah; his story is told in 2 Kings 22:1-23:30 and 2 Chronicles 34:1-35:27). The Bible tells us: *"Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him*

arise after him." (2 Kings 23:25). What a contrast to Manasseh! Josiah rids the land of idolatry, repairs the Temple and restores the worship of God. He orders the newly-discovered Book of the Law to be read to all the people; the nation then renews the covenant with God, and celebrates a great Passover. Zephaniah may have prophesied just after the Book's discovery in around 622 BC and Josiah may well have been encouraged in godliness by this prophet.

Nineveh, capital of Assyria, falls near the end of Josiah's reign in 612BC. This was foretold by Nahum (whose prophecy is dated around 630BC to 612BC). Babylon replaces Assyria as the dominant power of the Near East. The Egyptian army defeats Judah and kills Josiah, but in the end, after a brief subjection to Egypt (2 Kings 23:31-35), it is Babylon under the famous Nebuchadnezzar II (also called Nebuchadnezzar II) (605-562BC) that secures control of Judah (see 2 Kings 24:1,7). The Babylonian exile is very close.



The Babylonian Empire.

Exit to Exile

As Stephen Dempster says: *"In the prophets God bares his heart, and it is often a broken one."* God's people broke His heart. They were his beloved sons - but they rebelled against Him (Isaiah 1:2-4). They were His cherished bride - but they forsook their Husband, committed adultery, and prostituted themselves to the Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians and absorbed their pagan practices (Ezekiel 16:1-58 and compare Jeremiah 3:1). Psalm 106:6-46 and Daniel 9:3-19, too, catalogue God's people's dreadful litany of rebellion and vice.



'The Flight of the Prisoners' painted by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) and followers (The Jewish Museum, New York). A depiction of the Fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.

God's Law demanded execution for rebellious sons (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) and adulterous women (Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22). What was God to do? Over hundreds of years, He faithfully sent prophets to rebuke and warn them. But, with a few notable exceptions, God's people didn't listen to them (2 Chronicles 36:15-16, Nehemiah 9:30, Jeremiah 25:3-7, 35:15, Daniel 9:5-6).

From the beginning God warned His people that sin meant expulsion from the land (Deuteronomy 28:63-68, Leviticus 26:33-39). That warning was repeated (see 1 Kings 9:6-9 and parallel in 2 Chronicles 7:19-22). Near the bitter end, Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of the Temple and city and expulsion from the land if they continued to disobey God (Jeremiah 7:1-15, 26:1-6). They did continue, and their fate was sealed.

Banished to Babylon

Judah's deportation to Babylon is a long drawn-out process, told in 2 Kings 23:36-25:21, 2 Chronicles 36:5-21, Jeremiah 37:1-39:10, 52:1-30, and Daniel 1:1-7. It begins with Nebuchadnezzar making King Jehoiakim his vassal in around 605BC. At this time a small elite group including members of the royal family and exceptional young men, including Daniel and his three friends, are taken to Babylonia. In 597 BC 10,000 Judeans, including government personnel, warriors and craftsmen are taken. This group probably also include Ezekiel the prophet. In

588-586BC, Nebuchadnezzar besieges and sacks Jerusalem and razes Solomon's beautiful Temple to the ground. By that time, the Temple treasures have been looted and taken to Babylon. After Jerusalem's destruction, another group is taken to Babylonia. Finally, a few more Judeans are deported in **582 BC**.



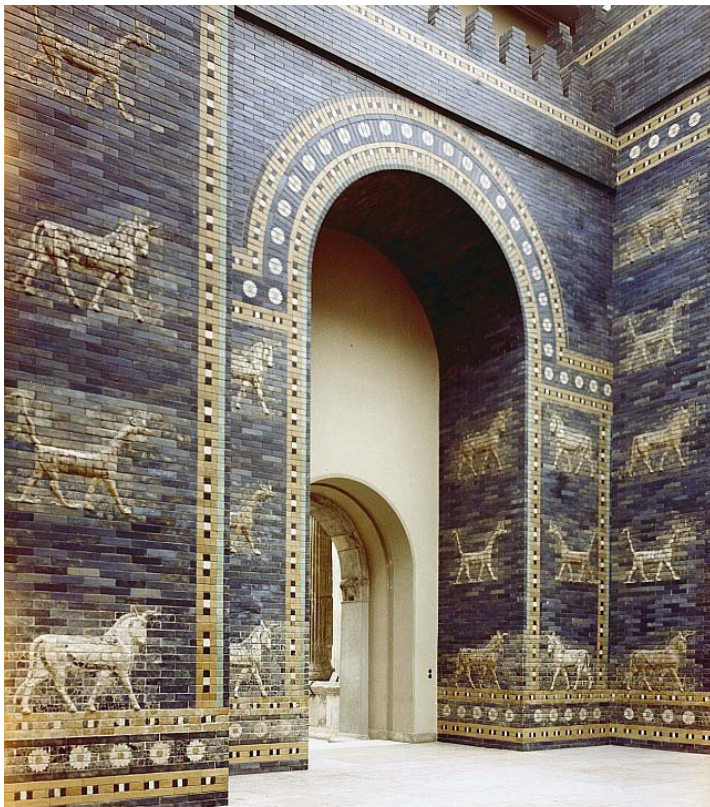
'The Chaldees Destroy the Brazen Sea' painted by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) or followers (The Jewish Museum, New York).

Habakkuk, who probably prophesied around **608-605BC**, foretells Judah's demise. And Obadiah may have prophesied around the time of Jerusalem's final fall. Obadiah thunders against Edom, and there's some evidence that the Edomites may have helped the Babylonians in this campaign.

Nebuchadnezzar places Gedaliah in charge of the people remaining in Judah (2 Kings 25.22-24, Jeremiah 40.7-12).

But Gedaliah is soon assassinated. In fear of Babylonian reprisals for his murder – and despite Jeremiah's warnings – many people flee to Egypt. They take Jeremiah with them. 2 Kings 25.25-26 and Jeremiah 41.1-43.7 record this unhappy story.

The expulsion from the Promised Land is now complete. Just as Adam and Eve were expelled eastwards from the Garden of Eden, so God's people are marched eastward out of their Garden of Eden to Babylon. Worst of all – the



The Ishtar Gate, a gate to the inner city of Babylon built around 575BC by Nebuchadnezzar II. A reconstruction at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin which includes actual excavated material.

Temple, God's home among His people, is in ruins.

Jeremiah lives through all this disaster. Racked with grief, he weeps as he sees the suffering about to engulf them (Jeremiah 9.1). Jesus, too, would one day weep over Jerusalem's approaching doom (Luke 19.41-44). The Book of Lamentations echoes God's own sorrow over His stricken people. And in exile, God's homesick people, too, weep by the rivers of Babylon (see Psalm 137.1-4).

Babylon versus Jerusalem

Babylon had swallowed up Jerusalem. Mankind's city overcame God's city.

Or had it? No! Proud Babylon was just a tool in God's hand to judge and discipline His people. One day Babylon would fall (Jeremiah 25.11-14, 50.1-51.64), just as God had crushed Assyria after they had fulfilled God's judgment on Israel (Isaiah 10.5-19). God has His hand firmly on the events of history. He alone causes empires to rise and fall (compare Acts 17.26). One day, God would bring His people back to the Promised Land (Isaiah 44.24-28, 45.13, Jeremiah 16.14-15, 23.7-8, 27.21-22, 32.36-44; see Deuteronomy 30.1-5 and compare 1 Kings 8.46-50). Babylon would fall, and Jerusalem would rise from the ashes.

"By the rivers of Babylon"



"By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion." (Psalm 137.1). A river scene on a branch of the Euphrates at Hillah, Iraq (an early photograph).

Jeremiah (who prophesied around **627-580BC**) told God's people not to resist deportation, but take on the yoke of Babylon (Jeremiah 21.8-9, 27.12-15, 38.17) and make a life for themselves in that land (Jeremiah 29.1-7). They were to build houses, plant gardens, marry and have children, and pray for God's blessing on the Babylonians. God promised that if the Babylonians prospered, so would they, His people.

And God's people did prosper in exile. Willem Vangemeren reports: "Historical evidence from Babylonian documents indicates that Jews indeed became a part of Babylonian society. They were involved in the agriculture, commerce, crafts, arts, and sciences, as well as administrative functions." The Bible tells how Jews were promoted to positions of top leadership in exile – notably Daniel and his three friends (see Daniel 2.48-49, 3.30, 6.1-3). In later years, too, after the return from exile had begun, we find

Mordecai described as “*great*” in the court of the Persian king Xerxes I, also named Ahasuerus (Esther 9.4). And Nehemiah is cupbearer to Xerxes’s son, king Artaxerxes I (Nehemiah 2.1).

But their prosperity may well have been tempered by

periods of persecution, as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego’s run-in with Nebuchadnezzar suggests (Daniel 3.1-30). A more general anti-Jewish undercurrent may also provide a background for the crisis recorded in the book of Esther.

Homecoming

Babylon does fall, just as God promised. In **539BC** the prince-regent of Babylonia, Belshazzar, holds a great feast. There he desecrates the golden goblets looted from the Temple many years before. And on the wall of the banquetting chamber, God writes His judgment on this

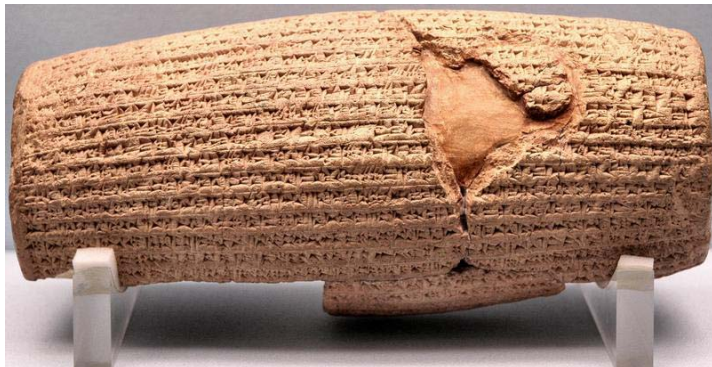


'Belshazzar's Feast' by Rembrandt (1606-1669) (The National Gallery, London). The king is terrified by the writing on the wall “*MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN*” (Daniel 5.25) – words that announced the end of Belshazzar’s kingdom and its seizure by the Medes and Persians.

blaspheming ruler, and on his kingdom. That very night the Persians seize Babylon (Daniel 5.1-31). Darius takes control, and the Persian Empire replaces the Babylonian Empire as the chief power in the Near East. (Darius may be another name for Cyrus, or a governor that Cyrus placed in charge of the newly conquered empire.)

Daniel the prophet knew, from Jeremiah’s prophecy, that the Jews’ return to the Promised Land was about to take place (Daniel 9.1-2, see Jeremiah 25.11-12, 29.10). So during the first year of Darius’s rule, he gives himself to prayer on behalf of God’s sinful nation (Daniel 9.3-19). He confesses the nation’s sins, and asks God to forgive and restore them.

And Daniel’s prayer is answered. Cyrus issues a decree



Photograph by Mike Peel www.mikepeel.net : Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 2.5)

Cylinder of Cyrus, made after the Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 BC (held in the British Museum). The text is written in Akkadian cuneiform script. In it, among other things, Cyrus boasts that he repatriated displaced peoples and restored temples.

encouraging the Jews to return to their homeland (2 Chronicles 36.22-23, Ezra 1.1-4, 6.1-5) - a policy he extends to other forcibly displaced people in Babylonia. Over a century and a half before, Isaiah had prophesied that Cyrus - whom he named - would do this (Isaiah 44.24-28, 45.1-13). Cyrus entrusts the Temple vessels and utensils looted by Nebuchadnezzar to Sheshbazzar, and appoints him to begin rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 1.7-11, 5.13-16).

The first return

Many Jews respond to Cyrus’s decree. Led by Zerubbabel, they make the long journey back to Judah. Ezra 2.1-67 and Nehemiah 7.6-69 list them. They may have returned in a number of groups over a period of some years (around **538-520 BC**). But doubtless quite a number returned straight away. It was another return and conquest of the Promised Land (see Jeremiah 16.14-15, 23.7-8).

Zerubbabel was a grandson of King Jehoiachin, and thus a direct descendant of David. He was also an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1.11-12 - Jechoniah is, it seems, another name for Jehoiachin). They may not now be kings, but David’s dynasty survives, just as God had promised.

The Jews settle the land (Ezra 2.70) and rebuild the altar in the old Temple courtyard (Ezra 3.1-6). In **537BC**, work on the Temple begins (Ezra 3.8-13).

But Satan hates God’s house being built, and opposition soon comes and brings work to a halt for a number of years (Ezra 4.1-5,24). But Darius I (**522-486 BC**) confirms Cyrus’s decree and in **520BC** work resumes, encouraged by Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5.1-6.14, Haggai 1.1-2.4, Zechariah 4.8-10). The people complete the Temple around **516BC** (Ezra 6.14-15).

It was about 70 years from the first deportation (around **605/604BC**) to the first return (**538BC**). It was also 70 years from the destruction of the first Temple in **586BC** to the dedication of the second around **516BC**. But 70 is also a symbolic number. God gives His land a rest from abuse and idolatry for a whole 70-year period – “*until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths*” (2 Chronicles 36.21). Only then would God let His people back in.

Plotting in Persia

Another crisis for God’s people occurs many years after the return under Cyrus, during the reign of Xerxes I (about **486-465BC**). Xerxes (also called Ahasuerus) marries Esther, a Jewess. The book of Esther recounts a bid to slaughter every Jew in the Persian Empire - both those who had returned to Judea (still under Persian domination) and those who remained in exile. It was another attempt by Satan to eliminate God’s chosen seed. But God saves His people (Esther 9.1-19) and many in the Persian Empire “*declared themselves Jews*” (Esther 8.17).



The Persian Empire around 400 BC.

Reading God's word; rebuilding the walls

After the Temple is finished, Artaxerxes I (464-423BC) sends two key people back to Judea to support those already there.

► In 458BC he sends **Ezra** (Ezra 7.1-8.36). He returns with more exiles, and with gold and silver for the Temple worship. One of his key goals is to teach the Law (the first five books of the Bible) to Israel (Ezra 7.10). He succeeds

brilliantly. God's word begins to be studied in a way it hasn't before – it was like the Reformation in Europe two millennia later. Ezra leads a great public reading of the Law in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8.1-12). This is open to everyone, and a team of teachers is on hand to help people understand the Law. Then the people keep the Feast of Tabernacles, confess their sins and promise to keep the Law (Nehemiah 8.13-10.39).

► In 445BC Artaxerxes sends **Nehemiah** to Jerusalem. His key task is to oversee the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, which were in ruins (Nehemiah 1.1-2.11). But - as with the rebuilding of the Temple - this isn't unopposed. Enemies try to discourage the people and interfere with the work (Nehemiah 2.19, 4.1-3, 7-8, 6.1-14). But in just 52 days, the walls are finished (Nehemiah 6.15-16).

Perhaps we have Esther to thank for Artaxerxes' kindly feeling toward the Jews and his interest in having Jerusalem rebuilt. Her husband Ahasuerus (also called Xerxes I), was Artaxerxes' father, and Esther may still have been alive during Artaxerxes' reign. But behind everything, God was at work ordering the events of history. Cyrus's rapid conquest, his decree, Darius's confirmation of the decree, and Artaxerxes' commissioning of Ezra and Nehemiah are all God's doing.

Visions of glory

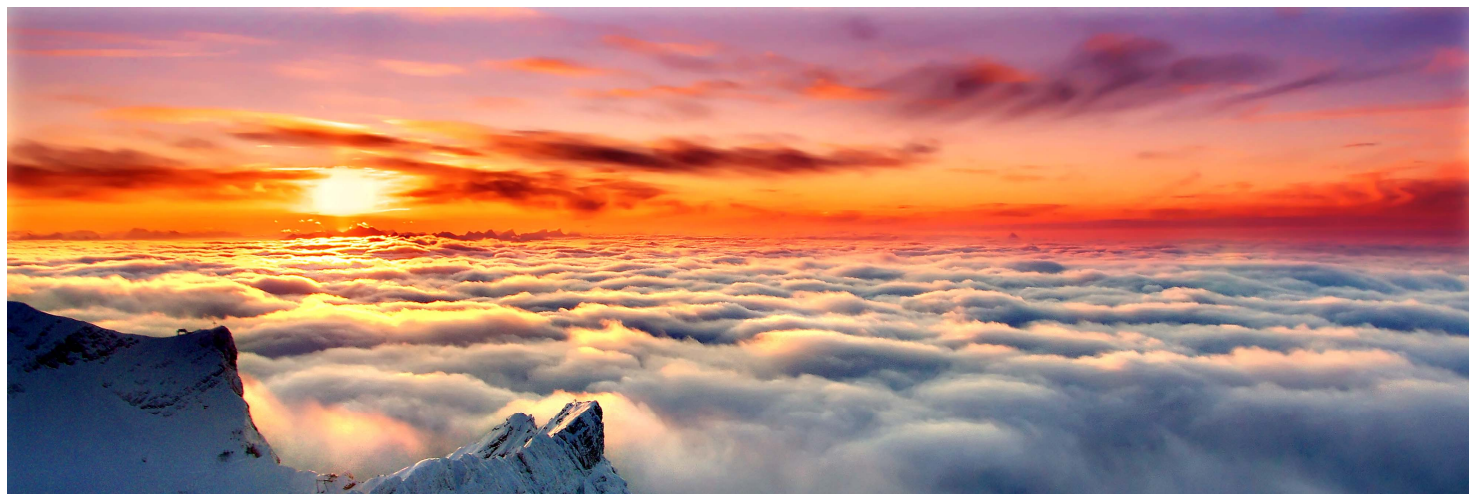


Image © <http://www.flickr.com/photos/traumlichtfabrik>

But the return isn't the glorious restoration that God's people doubtless hoped for. When its foundations are laid, the old men who had seen Solomon's Temple weep with disappointment – from which we may infer that it was far less magnificent than Solomon's splendid edifice (Ezra 3.11-13 and compare Haggai 2.3). The Ark of the Covenant - God's Throne - is missing, never to return. The Bible doesn't record God filling the new Temple with His presence (as He did in the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple). Judah is still under Persian control. There's no Davidic king on the throne.

And the people still backslide (see Malachi 1.6-8, 12-14, 2.7-16, 3.5, 8-9). Their sin had cost them the land, but they don't seem to have learned their lesson. It's almost as if God's people are still in exile.

But the prophets tell us this isn't the end of the story. Woven throughout their rebukes and warnings to God's people (see, for example, Isaiah 1.2-4, 5.1-30, Ezekiel 16.1-58, Hosea 11.1-7) and to the nations around (see especially

Isaiah 13.1-19.15, 20.1-21.17, 23.1-18, Ezekiel 25.1-28.23, 29.1-32.32) is a breathtaking message of hope. God is building on the prophecies of Genesis 3.15 and those given through Jacob (Genesis 49.10), Balaam (Numbers 24.17-19) and Nathan (2 Samuel 7.8-16). They unveil an astounding vista of future glory.

Think of everything that was most important and precious to God's people – the Exodus, the Promised Land, Jerusalem and its magnificent Temple, and their King. God was going to do a new and wonderful thing for His people! Through the prophets, God promised them a new Exodus, a new Promised Land, and victory over all their enemies. There'd be a new Jerusalem and a new Temple and a new King!

A new Promised Land

There'll be a new Promised Land, fertile, fruitful and filled with people, like a new Garden of Eden (Isaiah 51.3, Ezekiel 36.33-36, Amos 9.13-14).

In fact, there'll be new heavens and a new Earth (Isaiah 65.17-25). Nations will live at peace with each other; the world will enjoy peace and harmony (see Isaiah 11.6-9, 65.25, Micah 4.3-4).

A new Exodus

There'll be a new return to the Promised Land, like a new Exodus (see Isaiah 11.10-16, 35.1-10, Ezekiel 34.11-16, 36.24, Amos 9.14-15, Zechariah 8.7-8). Israel will again divide the land (Ezekiel 47.13-48.29) and live there. Jerusalem, its capital, will be called, "*The LORD is there*".

A new victory over all their enemies

All the enemies of God's people will be defeated (see Ezekiel 38.1-39.29 and compare Numbers 24.14,17-19). But it's not merely earthly enemies who are vanquished. Satan himself, the "*twisting serpent*" (Isaiah 27.1), will be overthrown (compare Genesis 3.15). God will give global dominion to the Son of Man and to God's people (Daniel 7.1-28). Humanity will receive its God-given dominion over the Earth at last (see Genesis 1.26,28).

A new King

A new King David will rule over God's people for ever - David will indeed have an eternal dynasty (Psalm 89.3-4,28-29,35-37, Jeremiah 33.17,20-21, Ezekiel 37.24).

This King will be God's Son (see Psalm 2.6-7, part of which is quoted in Hebrews 1.5). Indeed, He would be God Himself! (Isaiah 9.6-7; and Psalm 45.6-7, quoted in Hebrews 1.8-9). And this King's dominion will extend to every region of the globe (Psalm 2.8, Zechariah 9.9-10, Daniel 7.13-14).

A new city

There'll be a new Jerusalem (see Zechariah 8.3-5) - foursquare with 12 gates (Ezekiel 48.30-35, see Revelation 21.9-27)). The cloud and fire of God's presence - the Shekinah glory - will overshadow it (Isaiah 4.5). It will be the centre and capital, not just of the land of Israel, but of the whole world (compare Isaiah 2.2-3, Micah 4.1-2).

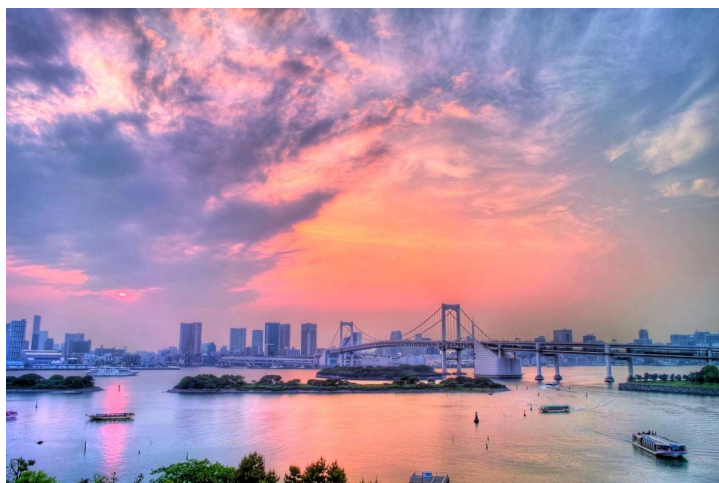


Image © Guwashi999 : Flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

Sunset over the Rainbow Bridge, Odaiba, Tokyo. One day the sun will set for the last time over the cities of this world, and the Holy City, New Jerusalem, will come down out of heaven from God (Revelation 21.2).

A new Temple

There'll be a new Temple (Ezekiel 40.1-42.20, 43.13-17); God will live there and fill it with His glory, just as He did in the Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon (Ezekiel 43.1-7, see

Haggai 2.6-9). God will live among His people (Isaiah 12.6, Ezekiel 37.26-28, Zephaniah 3.14-17, Zechariah 2.10-11); He will be their God and they will be His people (for example Jeremiah 31.33, Ezekiel 11.20, Hosea 2.23, Zechariah 8.8, compare Revelation 21.2-3). And from God's Temple a river gushes out, bringing life wherever it flows - just like the rivers that flowed from the Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 47.1-12, Zechariah 14.8, compare Revelation 22.1-2).

Here's the fulfilment of everything God's been working towards from the time He created the universe - **God living in His paradise with His beloved people.**

A new blessing to the nations

The nations will find blessing through God's people (see Micah 5.7, Zechariah 8.13,20-23), just as God had promised Abraham (Genesis 12.2-3, 22.18, see also Acts 3.25 and Galatians 3.8). People from across the world will find salvation. And so God's people will spread across the whole Earth, as Isaiah prophesied "*In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit.*" (Isaiah 27.6).

◆ Glory to God! ◆

God will be vindicated and glorified through all this (Ezekiel 36.22-23). The whole Earth will be filled with His glory (Habakkuk 2.14, see Isaiah 40.5), and all nations will worship Him (Psalm 22.27, 86.9, Malachi 1.11).

A new cleansing from sin

But how are all these wonderful things going to come about? It's sin that deprived God's people of the Promised Land; it's sin that led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; it's sin that unseated David's descendants from his throne. And God's people are still sinning - even after the exile.

What's the fundamental problem? It's this: they're "*dead in . . . trespasses and sins*" (Ephesians 2.1). As we saw in session 4, death isn't annihilation, it's a crossing over into a new and different mode of existence. When they fell, Adam and Eve passed into a new kind of existence. As C.S. Lewis put it: "*. . . it was the emergence of a new kind of man—a new species, never made by God, had sinned itself into existence.*" And that state of affairs continued through the entire Old Testament period. There were many faithful people - Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Josiah, to name just a few. God forgave these saints and accepted them into fellowship with Him. But the basic problem remained - all humanity was dead in trespasses and sins.

Sin must be fully and finally dealt with - or none of these blessings that the prophets foretold can ever happen.

A new people

The only remedy for death is resurrection. And that's what will happen! God's people will rise from the dead - dry bones will be clothed with flesh and sparked into life by God's Spirit (Ezekiel 37.1-14).

God will write His law on their hearts (Jeremiah 31.33, quoted in Hebrews 8.10). He will give them a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36.26 and see also Ezekiel 11.19-20). God will put His Spirit within them (Ezekiel 36.27, 37.14); He promises them, "*I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh*" (Joel 2.28) - a passage Peter quoted on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2.17). God will cleanse and purify His

people (Isaiah 4.3-4, Ezekiel 36.25, 37.23, Zechariah 13.1, Malachi 3.2-4). They'll be new creations (see 2 Corinthians 5.17). Now at last they'll be able to keep God's Law (Ezekiel 36.27, 37.24).

The coming Saviour – our Priest and King

How does this happen? The promised King will do it. Daniel calls Him **Messiah** (Daniel 9.25-26 NKJV). The Hebrew word here is *māshîach*, meaning 'anointed one' (in fact, the ESV translates this "*an anointed one*"). Both kings and priests were consecrated by being anointed with oil (see Exodus 40.12-15, 1 Samuel 10.1, 1 Samuel 16.1,11-13).

God is telling us through Daniel that the Messiah will be a King and a Priest (see also Psalm 110.1-2,4, Zechariah 6.11-13). This is revolutionary – till now, Israel's kings were

never priests as well (compare 2 Chronicles 26.16-20).

This Royal Priest will make an offering for sin. But unlike any other priest, He Himself will be the offering (see Isaiah 52.13-53.12; and Zechariah 12.10, quoted in John 19.37). His offering will deal with all sin for all time (Daniel 9.24, and see Hebrews 9.11-12,24-26).

In the Old Testament the promised Messiah is actually called "*Messiah*" (NKJV) only here in this passage in Daniel. But the idea of a Messiah begins right back in Genesis and grows stronger and clearer as we progress through the Old Testament. We discover that He will save God's people, defeat their enemies, and rule the world in righteousness and justice. The New Testament reveals His true identity. The Greek translation for *māshîach* is Christ (Greek *christos*). The Messiah is Jesus Christ.

Foot Note Perplexed by the prophets

We can easily find ourselves puzzled and confused by Bible prophecy - just as the Ethiopian eunuch was (Acts 8.27-34)! The prophets lived in an ancient Near Eastern culture alien to ours. They used poetry, imagery (for example Isaiah 41.15-16) and parables (for example Ezekiel 17.1-10). There are heavenly encounters and visions (for example Ezekiel 1.1-28, Zechariah 4.1-14). They refer to events, places and people in a long-vanished world. They sometimes interweave events close at hand with those far in the future (often called 'prophetic foreshortening'). And some prophecies have more than one level of fulfilment.

Attuned to our modern scientific Western culture, we're often inclined to interpret Bible prophecy in a literalistic and mechanical way. We're eager to pin down the chronology and fix a precise sequence of events.

This approach can sometimes mislead us badly. We need to recognise how the prophets' language and imagery was intended to be understood. Above all, we must compare Scripture with Scripture; and we must listen attentively to the Holy Spirit as He illuminates the prophetic message to us.

Blazing a trail for the Church

The Exile wasn't the tragedy it might seem at first sight. It was a key step in God's plan for the world. From the Exile to the return to the land and on through the centuries to the end of the Old Testament era, God was preparing His people - and the world - for the coming of His Son.

Drawing the Gentiles

We saw earlier in this session how Gentiles could come to live in the Promised Land and share in its blessings - and could actually become members of God's covenant people. From the time of the Exile, we find this happening more and more. Gentiles joined themselves to the Jewish community, as Willem Vangemeren tells us: "From this time onward we find an increase in proselytes, who join the Jews in the worship of Yahweh, and the beginnings of God-fearers, who want to learn more about the God of Israel." The gospel found good ground among these people, as we shall see.

Dispersing to the nations

And something else was happening now. Not only could Gentiles come among God's people, God's people were going out to the Gentiles. They settled in Gentile lands. This was another step in the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham that in him all the families of the Earth would find blessing (Genesis 12.3).

In fact, this emigration began well before the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, and continued long afterwards. People from Israel and Judah probably began to emigrate to Syria, Egypt, or even Asia Minor (Turkey) as early as the 8th century BC to escape the Assyrians and

then the Babylonians. A considerable number who remained in Judah after Jerusalem's fall in **586BC** fled to Egypt, as we've seen. Most Jews who did get taken to Babylonia remained there and didn't return to Palestine. And from the time of Alexander the Great (died 323 BC), many Jews emigrated to Egypt and to various other countries - for example, to pursue commerce and trade. There were, it seems, more Jews living outside the Promised Land than in it!



Image © Jastrow / Marie-Lan Nguyen : Wikimedia

A portrait of Alexander the Great – detail from the Alexander Mosaic, dating from around 100 BC. This famous Roman floor mosaic was originally from the House of the Faun in Pompeii. It depicts a battle between the armies of Alexander the Great and Darius III of Persia. The mosaic is now in the Naples National Archaeological Museum.

Acts 2.8-11 shows just how widely the Jews had dispersed – pilgrims had come to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost from such regions such as Iran, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor,



'The School of Athens', by the Italian Renaissance artist Raphael (1483 – 1520). It is in the Stanze di Raffaello, in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. In the centre of the painting, the artist depicts Plato on the left and Aristotle, his student, on the right. Around them are other figures, all or at least chiefly, philosophers of the ancient world. A painting which wonderfully captures the spirit of the Renaissance, a cultural movement from the 14th to the 17th century that drew inspiration from the classical world of Greece and Rome.

Egypt, North Africa, Crete and Italy. This dispersion, as we shall see, became highly significant for the early Church's missionary thrust.

Forsaking idolatry

During the Exile, God purged Israel from their besetting sin, idolatry. Allen Ross tells us, "Never again did the nation embrace idolatry on such a scale as it had before the exile."

Living in a cosmopolitan world

But exile and emigration, and subjugation of the Promised Land itself to foreign powers, brought Jews face to face with pagan cultures as never before.

For example, those in Babylonia were impacted by its culture – including the adoption of the Aramaic language, the trade language of the Babylonian Empire. Passages in the books of Ezra and Daniel and a verse in the Book of Jeremiah are in Aramaic, not Hebrew (Ezra 4.8-6.18, 7.12-26, Jeremiah 10.11, Daniel 2.4b-7.28).

But the most significant cultural challenge during that inter-testamental period was Greek culture – in Willem Vangemeren's words, "a sophisticated culture that was considered superior by all who sought after it". Greek culture, philosophy and way of life (called 'Hellenism') followed in the wake of Alexander the Great's conquests. Like the Babylonian culture, Hellenism, too, brought a new language – Greek. This was the language in which the whole New Testament was written.

In addition, the Promised Land itself was under foreign subjugation, apart from a brief period of relative

independence from **142 BC** to **63 BC**, in which year it became part of the Roman Empire.

How could Jews respond to these cultural and political pressures? They reacted in a number of ways and Jewish society became ever more fragmented – by politics, by religious idealism, and by varying degrees of adaptation to the prevailing culture. For example, some in the Promised Land resorted to political intrigue and opportunism. Many – both at home and abroad – embraced Hellenism, while others reacted strongly against foreign culture through a strict adherence to the Law, such as the Pharisees. We'll meet this group along with some others in the next session. Amid social, political and religious turmoil, many looked earnestly, even desperately, for God's intervention on behalf of His people. Like today, speculation about the 'end times' was rife.

Prayer and the Scriptures

In New Testament times – as they do to this day – Jews met for prayer and Scripture study at 'synagogues' (a Greek name meaning 'a gathering together'). How the synagogue originated is disputed. But it may well have begun as a permanent institution during the Exile, when they couldn't meet in the Temple.

The Sabbath began to be widely observed. And especially thanks to Ezra, God's word was established as the basis for the life of God's people. Its study and application became a key part of Jewish life. During this period between the return from Exile and Jesus's birth, the Jewish Scriptures were gathered together into the Old Testament as we know it today. They were also translated into Greek (this

translation is called the Septuagint) thus enabling a much wider range of people to read it.

The synagogues would one day become launch pads for the proclamation of the Gospel, paving the way for the expansion of the church (see, for example, Acts 9.19-20, 13.5). And the organisation and activities of a synagogue had an important influence on local church life in apostolic days. Brad Blue tells us, “In many respects the early house-church was a Christian synagogue”. God is blazing a trail for the Church and for the evangelisation of the world!



Image © Judae1 / Juda S. Engelmayer : Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Bimah (table from which the Torah is read aloud) in use at the historic Bialystoker Synagogue in New York City.

Under Gentile domination

In the centuries before Jesus’s coming, several great empires successively dominated the Promised Land. As we’ve seen, the **Assyrian** Empire gave way to the **Babylonian**, and the Babylonian to the **Persian** in **539BC** when Cyrus took Babylon. The Persian Empire fell, in turn, to the **Greek** Alexander the Great. Alexander died in **323BC** at the age of only 33, and his empire was divided among his generals, two of whom were Ptolemy and Seleucus. For most of the period from **320BC** till **198BC**, Judea was ruled by the **Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt**, a rule that was contested by the **Seleucid dynasty of Syria**.

Then from **198BC** the Seleucid dynasty took control. The Seleucid Antiochus IV was committed to Hellenisation (promoting Greek language, culture and religion). In **167BC** he sacked the city of Jerusalem and massacred many. He also tried to stamp out Jewish religion; Jews were forbidden to observe the Sabbath or circumcise their children. He stopped the daily morning and evening offerings (Daniel 11.31). And he had a pagan altar built in



Image © Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. <http://www.cngcoins.com/> (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Tetradrachm (a four-drachma coin) of Antiochus IV. On the reverse is the Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥ ΝΙΚΗΦΟΡΟΥ (‘Of the King Antiochus, God Manifest, Bearer of Victory’). Antiochus’ egotism is appalling.

the Temple - this appalling sacrilege was “*the abomination that makes desolate*” of Daniel 11.31 and 12.11 (compare Matthew 24.15 - Jesus foretold another act of sacrilege in the Temple that would occur after His death).

A heroic Jewish resistance campaign (the **Maccabean revolt**) gave the Jews around 80 years of relative independence from **142 BC** until the Roman general Pompey took control of Jerusalem in **63BC**. The **Romans** were in charge during Jesus’s day.

Daniel’s panorama of history

God showed faithful Daniel about this succession of empires. Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonian Empire, dreamed one night about a towering image (Daniel 2.25-45). Its head of gold pictures the Babylonian Empire; its silver chest and arms the Medo-Persian Empire; its bronze middle and thighs the Greek Empire; its legs of iron with feet partly of iron and partly of clay represent the Roman Empire.

Years later, God showed Daniel these same four empires again – not as a great image but as horrific and terrifying beasts (Daniel 7.1-28). We now see these four empires in their underlying evil reality. Here is fallen mankind, inspired by Satan, aspiring – time and again - to create a global society without God. The Babylonian Empire is like a winged lion; the Medo-Persian like a devouring bear; the Greek Empire like a winged four-headed leopard.



Image © Droberta / Roberta Dragan : Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 2.5)

The Pantheon (from Greek: Πάνθεον, an adjective meaning ‘to every god’) is a building in Rome, commissioned by Marcus Agrippa as a temple to all the gods of Ancient Rome, and rebuilt by Emperor Hadrian in about 126 AD. The building is circular with a portico of Corinthian columns. It is one of the best preserved of all Roman buildings, and has been in continuous use throughout its history. Since the 7th century, it has been used as a Roman Catholic church. The Pantheon’s dome remains the world’s largest unreinforced concrete dome. Greek and Roman architecture have had enormous influence on architecture from the Renaissance onwards into modern times.

Finally, the Roman Empire appears as a fearful horned beast of terrifying destructive power. Then a little horn emerges from among this beast’s horns, which makes “*war with the saints*” and blasphemes God (Daniel 7.21,25). This horn, too, “*shall think to change the times and the law*” (Daniel 7.25) – probably religious feasts and moral ordinances. In other words, he wants to change things that are foundations of human life. This is God’s prerogative alone (compare Daniel 2.21).

Through these visions, God is showing Daniel a bird’s eye view of world history stretching from his time to the end of history as we know it. The Babylonian Empire was absorbed into the Medo-Persian Empire. This, in turn, was conquered by the Greek Empire, which was itself largely swallowed up by the Roman Empire.

But there’s a sense in which the Roman Empire remains to this day in the form of our own Western European

civilisation. The Roman Empire was never conquered by another great power in the way the first three empires were. It simply decayed, withdrawing from its territories or being overrun piecemeal, until in **1453** Constantinople, the capital of the eastern half of the empire, fell to the Turks.

But alongside the eastern Roman Empire, a European confederation called the Holy Roman Empire emerged. This came into being in the early Middle Ages and breathed its last in **1806**. It was considered to be a continuation of the Roman Empire. So we can argue that the Roman Empire – in theory at least – lasted into relatively modern times. Edward Young (commenting on Daniel 7) says: “This is certainly not to deny that elements other than Roman have contributed to form the present European governments, but it cannot be doubted that modern Europe may in a very legitimate sense have arisen from Rome”.

Roman and Greek ideas underpin our modern Western civilisation. The Renaissance – a cultural movement that began in Italy in the 15th century and gave birth to our



Image © Nick in exilto / Nick Thompson : Flickr.com (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Horses of St Mark's, a set of metal statues of four horses, dating from classical times – a triumph of classical art and technology that still astonishes us today.

They have been attributed to the 4th century BC Greek sculptor Lysippos, although this has not been widely accepted. Made of copper alloy, their method of production suggests a Roman rather than a Greek origin. They were once displayed at the Hippodrome of Constantinople. Looted in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade, they were sent to Venice, where they were displayed in the façade of St. Mark's Basilica in 1254. They are now replaced by replicas, and the originals are displayed inside the Basilica.


modern age – drew inspiration from the classical world of Greece and Rome.

So these visions take us to our own day. And they take us on into the future. The little horn that arose from this empire represents a blasphemous anti-Christian power that seeks to do what God alone can do (Daniel 7.8,20-22,24-26). It seems very likely that it pictures the coming Antichrist who will make his appearance at the end of this age (see (1 John 2.18, 2 Thessalonians 2.3-10).

The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was shattered by a stone that became a great mountain filling the earth (Daniel 2.34-35). The fourth and final beast of Daniel's own vision was killed and its little horn's dominion destroyed. Dominion was given to the Son of Man and to God's people (Daniel 7.11, 13-14, 24-27).

Here in visionary form, we see the coming of God's Kingdom and His victory over the Satanically-inspired world powers. The dominion of this Earth belongs to Jesus Christ, and to His people. After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28.18, and compare Ephesians 1.20-22). And one day the Man Christ Jesus will rule the new Earth. He will share that rule with His saints (Daniel 7.18,27). Mankind will be God's vice-regent, with God-given dominion over this Earth just as God had planned from the beginning (Genesis 1.26,28).

So God's Kingdom will come in its final glory at Jesus's Second Coming. But the final phase of God's assault on Satan's kingdom is already under way. It began with Jesus's first coming. He opened His ministry with these words: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.” (Mark 1.15). God's Kingdom is even now advancing and growing across the globe. Jesus already has all authority in Heaven and on Earth.


Next Session Immanuel, God With Us
We'll review Jesus's birth, life and ministry until He enters Jerusalem, days before His sacrificial death on the Cross.

CREDITS ► Text 2012 © Robert Gordon Betts rbetts@btinternet.com. ► All scripture quotations (unless otherwise indicated) and those marked “ESV” are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, published by HarperCollins Publishers © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ► Scripture quotations marked “NKJV” are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ► Scripture quotations marked “NIV” are taken from the The Holy Bible, New International Version (Anglicised edition). Copyright © 1979, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, an Hachette UK company. All rights reserved. “NIV” is a registered trademark of International Bible Society. UK trademark number 1448790. ► Small logo image of winding road at top of page 1 supplied by Serif (Europe) Ltd. Image cropped. ► Image of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba on page 1 is “Solomon and the Queen of Sheba” painted by Giovanni Demin (1789-1859). Image published at http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sheba_demin.jpg and considered by the Wikimedia Foundation to be in the public domain. ► Image of sheep on page 2 copyright © hoyasmeg / James Emery : Flickr.com (whose profile is at <http://www.flickr.com/people/emery/>) and entitled “Sheep @ Nazareth Village. 0721”. Image published at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/emery/1513650226/> and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic licence (viewable at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en_GB). Image cropped. ► Illustration of Solomon's Temple on page 3 from the “Candle Atlas of the Bible” by Tim Dowley and copyright © 2004 Lion Hudson plc/Tim Dowley & Peter Wyart trading as Three's Company. Used with kind permission of Candle Books/Lion Hudson plc. Image cropped. ► Image of Solomon dedicating the Temple on page 3 is “Solomon Dedicates the Temple at Jerusalem” painted by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) or followers and held by the Jewish Museum, New York. Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tissot_Solomon_Dedicates_the_Temple_at_Jerusalem.jpg and in the public domain. ► Image of ancient Gamla on page 4 copyright © vad_levin : Flickr.com (whose profile is at http://www.flickr.com/people/vad_levin/) and entitled “Ancient Gamla, view to Kinneret”. Image published at http://www.flickr.com/photos/vad_levin/474330682/ and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Generic licence (viewable at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/deed.en_GB). Image cropped. ► Image of date palm on page 5 copyright © B. Simpson / Cairocamels : Wikimedia (whose profile is at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Cairocamels>) and described as “Date Palm (Phoenix dactylifera), Dahab, South Sinai, Egypt”. Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dahab_Egypt_Phoenix_dactylifera.JPG and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported licence (viewable at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en>). Image cropped. ► Map of Divided Kingdom on page 5 copyright © 2006 MANNA www.biblemaps.com. All rights reserved. Used by kind permission of the MANNA Bible Maps. ► Image of Obelisk of Shalmaneser on page 6 copyright © Steven J. Johnson : Wikipedia (whose profile is at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Steven>) and described as “Depiction of Jehu King of Israel giving tribute to King Shalmaneser III of Assyria, on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III from Nimrud (circa 827 BC) in the British Museum (London)”. Image published at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jehu-on-Obelisk-of-Shalmaneser.jpg> and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported licence (viewable at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>). Image cropped. ► Map of Assyrian Empire on page 6 copyright © 2006 MANNA www.biblemaps.com. All rights reserved. Used by kind permission of the MANNA Bible Maps. ► Image of Taylor Prism on page 7 copyright © Dcastor / David Castor : Wikimedia and described as “The Taylor Prism from the Neo-Assyrian empire tells the story of king Sennacherib's third campaign and includes descriptions of his conquests in Judah, some of which are described from another point of view in the old testament of the Bible.” Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Taylor_Prism-1.jpg. The author grants anyone the right to use this work for any purpose, without any conditions, unless such conditions are required by law. Image cropped. ► Map of Babylonian Empire on page 8 copyright © 2006 MANNA www.biblemaps.com. All rights reserved. Used by kind permission of the MANNA Bible Maps. ► Image of the fall of Jerusalem on page 8 is “The Flight of the Prisoners” painted by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) and followers and held by the Jewish Museum, New York. Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tissot_The_Flight_of_the_Prisoners.jpg and considered by the Wikimedia Foundation to be in the public domain. ► Image of the destruction of the Temple on page 9 is “The Chaldees Destroy the Brazen Sea” painted by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) or followers and held by the Jewish Museum, New York. Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tissot_The_Chaldees_Destroy_the_Brazen_Sea.jpg and in the public domain. ► Image of Ishtar Gate on page 9 by Richard Peter (1895-1977), provided by the Deutsche Fotothek and described as “Berlin, Pergamonmuseum, Ishtar-Tor”. Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fotothek_df_ps_0002470_Innenf%C3%A4ume_%E5%A4ude.jpg and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Germany licence (viewable at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/de/deed.en>). Image cropped. ► Image of Euphrates River on page 9 described as “Iraq, River scenes on the Euphrates taken at Hilla. Typical river boats” (created/published 1932). Image held by the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. Image published at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/mpc2010001617/PP/>. No known restrictions on publication. Image cropped. ► Image of Belshazzar's Feast on page 10 is “Belshazzar's Feast” painted by Rembrandt (1606-1669) and held by the National Gallery, London. Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_-_Belshazzar%27s_Feast_-_WGA19123.jpg and considered by the Wikimedia Foundation to be in the public domain. ► Image of the Cyrus Cylinder on page 10 copyright © Mike Peel www.mikepeel.net : Wikimedia (whose profile is at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Mike_Peel) and described as “Cyrus cylinder in the British Museum.” Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cyrus_Cylinder.jpg and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.5 Generic licence (viewable at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/deed.en>). ► Map of Persian Empire on page 11 copyright © 2006 MANNA www.biblemaps.com. All rights reserved. Used by kind permission of the MANNA Bible Maps. ► Image of sunset over mountains on page 11 copyright © traumlichtfabrik / Edgar Moskopp : Flickr.com (whose profile is at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/traumlichtfabrik/>). All rights reserved. Used by kind permission of the author. Image cropped. ► Image of cityscape at sunset on page 12 copyright © Guwash999 : Flickr.com (whose profile is at <http://www.flickr.com/people/guwash999/>) and entitled “Sunset @ Rainbow Bridge (HDR)”. Image published at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/guwash999/2497590008/> and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic licence (viewable at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en_GB). ► Image of mosaic of Alexander the Great on page 13 by Jastrow / Marie-Lan Nguyen : Wikimedia (whose profile is at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Jastrow>) and entitled “So-called Alexander Mosaic”. Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Battle_of_Issus_MAN_Napoli Inv10020_n03.jpg and in the public domain. Image cropped. ► Image on page 14 is “The School of Athens” painted by Raphael (1483 – 1520) and in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. Image published at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sanzio_01.jpg and considered by the Wikimedia Foundation to be in the public domain. Image cropped. ► Image of interior of synagogue on page 15 copyright © Judae1 / Juda S. Engelmayr : Wikimedia and described as “Bimah in use at Bialystoker 2007”. Image published at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BialyBimah.JPG> and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported licence (viewable at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>). Image cropped. ► Image of ancient coin on page 15 copyright © Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. <http://www.cncoins.com>. Image published at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Antiochus_IV_Epiphanes_Morkholm_14.jpg and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported licence (viewable at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>). ► Image of the Pantheon on page 15 copyright © Droberta / Roberta Dragan : Wikimedia. Image published at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:IMG_0558RD.jpg and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.5 Generic licence (viewable at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/deed.en>). Image cropped. ► Image of horse statues on page 16 copyright © Nick in exilto / Nick Thompson : Flickr.com (whose profile is at <http://www.flickr.com/people/pelegrino/>) and entitled “The horses”. Image published at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/pelegrino/4622628081/> and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic licence (viewable at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/deed.en_GB). Image cropped. VERSION DATE 2013 June 8