PROGRESS OF
REDEMPTION

Volume I

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# PROGRESS OF REDEMPTION
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INTRODUCTION

Why a book dealing with the unity of Scripture? The major reason is this:

The Bible is an enigma.

That is, the man on the street, in trying to read the Bible like any other book soon discovers that it does not read like any other book! If he tries to read it like a novel or story it becomes an utterly confounding task. Why? Well, those of us who have long embraced the Bible fail to realize what an impact this strange book has on the reader who picks it up for the first time.

First of all, he is confronted with 66 different books, yet is asked to reconcile these 66 books as being one! Adding to the confusion is the fact that we ask him to wade through history, law, poetry, epic and lyric, proverb, prophecy, parable, oration, epistle and sermon and readily consent to the idea that one continuous story unfolds throughout all these varied writings!

But it's not just the man on the street who is perplexed by all this; the Christian layman, despite his
emphatic endorsement of the Bible's **authority**, **inerrancy**, and **divine inspiration**, more often than not finds this precious volume to be utterly impenetrable:

Suzanne de Dietrich gives graphic reality to the problem in her book entitled, *God's Unfolding Purpose*. She writes:

"Many people hesitate before the Bible in much the same way they hesitate at the edge of a dense forest." 2

She enlarges her analogy by suggesting that many halt before the pages of Scripture, not knowing where or how to enter, unsure of a sovereign pathway, and overwhelmed at the hope of ever completing their walk successfully.

The problem is accentuated by another writer who observes:

"Despite the dedicated scholarship of two thousand years the Bible remains a partially unfathomed Book." 3
To be sure, the dilemma we wish to address is not man-contrived. It really exists. But it exists not because men have no hunger for the meat of the Word, nor for the lack of those poor in spirit seeking the face of an all-wise God. A more legitimate reason is found in Isaiah 55:8.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord."

This could be a serious problem. Have you ever been around someone who doesn't do things the way you would if you were the person in authority? Have you ever been frustrated by your inability to understand why that person functions the way he does? Do you think God and man ever come to such a point?

Oftentimes, getting to know that person, and knowing what he is trying to accomplish will help us in understanding him and the way he operates. So it is with God. He does not want us locked into a dilemma. He delights in intimate acquaintance, and He desires to show us His ways. (See Psalm 25:9 and 103:7!)

And that's our course. Not to dissect a Book and put it back together again. Not merely to have a functional understanding of the unity of Scripture. Ours is this: to see the love that drew salvation's plan; the grace that brought it down to man—to see God and to
Many writers have tackled the problem of comprehending this seemingly formidable book, the Bible. They believe the average layman can grasp the overall plan of the Bible if he will but take heed to the unifying motif found within Scripture itself.

There are, of course, differing views as to what actually holds Scripture together and serves as its central unifying thrust. Some, for example, expound a "red line of redemption", which involves tracing allusions and specific references to the cross, beginning with Gen. 3:15. Others build around succeeding covenants and dispensations, while still others suggest a topical or doctrinal cohesion.

<table>
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<th>The Unifying Force of Scripture: Some Proposals:</th>
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<td>Gen. 3:15---------→</td>
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It is not our intent to investigate any of the above, nor to argue for the superiority of one over the other. They are mentioned just to establish the fact that various grids can be imposed upon the Word of God for the purpose of tracing out one specific theme.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Before we unveil our own proposed framework for viewing the unity of the Bible, it behooves us to define particular key words and concepts involved in our study. Granted, these definitions may seem elementary, and yet, without a correct understanding of important basic terms, the reader cannot handle aright the task before him.

Since our focus will be upon the unity of the Biblical record, we need to define what we mean by the term, unity. The dictionary defines unity as the state of being one. Perhaps the following teaser will evidence the need for a more specific definition of the term.

For example, would you agree with the statement that the Bible is one book? Indeed, Christians are fervent in acknowledging that the Scriptures cannot be broken.

But wait a minute! Have you ever pondered the Table of Contents in your own Bible? Does it trouble you that publishers divide the Bible into two distinct works: the Old Testament and the New Testament? Have you ever purchased just the New Testament portion of Scripture? This peculiarity leaves us with a problem: how can two books be one Book?
And the issue becomes even more complicated when one considers the fact that 66 individual books are listed in our Bible. If unity is dealing with the "oneness" of Scripture, how can 66 books be 1 book?!

Do you see now why the man on the street is so perplexed? He hears the Christian community speak of one authoritative book, yet he doesn't see the Bible as being one book! Oh, yes, it is bound together and put under one cover, but does that make it one? Would you dare glean the following volumes from your own bookshelf at home, bind them under one cover and try to tell your neighbor to read it like any ordinary book?

Absurd, you say? Marcus Dods, in The Bible, It's Nature and Origin, makes this most amusing observation:
"If you bound into one volume Knox's History of the Reformation, the Olney Hymns, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Savonarola's Sermons, the Sayings of Samuel Johnson, Cowper's Letters, and Hamlet, you would not have a volume more miscellaneous in form than the Bible."

Perhaps you have never considered how extreme the Bible is in its diversity before, yet it is one reason why many do not grasp the nature of the Bible's unity.

You see, in looking at the Bible's unity, we are not approaching Scripture the way you would in a Bible survey course. Here's what happens in a typical Bible survey: you start with Genesis, catch an overall view of its contents and then move on to Exodus. Once you get the basic facts in Exodus, you move on to Leviticus, then to Numbers and so on. In a sense, you master each individual book, one by one, until you've looked at all of Scripture. In so doing, however, you have not touched the unity of the Bible!

Now watch. Have you ever seen how all these diverse books fit together? Have you? Have you really seen the unity of the Scriptures for yourself? We've already acknowledged that many people pick up the Bible and try to read it like they would any other book. And that's the
frustrating part, because the Bible is not a "book" in the usual sense. It's one thing to talk theoretically about the oneness and great unity of the Bible, but let's see if we really understand it as one book after all.

For example, what do you know about the book of Joshua? Can you quote a verse from Joshua? Do you know what form it is written in? That's general survey. Now, consider this question: would you say the book of Psalms is an extension of Joshua?

Moreover, how do you put these two books together, books that are so radically different from one another, not just in content but also in form? Can they be joined?

What about the book of Esther (which doesn't even mention the name of God once!), and the book of Isaiah (Behold your God!)? Is there a relationship between these two? Do they hook together? Look! How can you put all the books of Scripture together and talk about one book if you can't even see a unity between two of its books?

Dear reader, this is why an understanding of the unity of Scripture is so vital; you will not understand
your "weapon" (nor use it effectively) if you don't see how it all fits.

Dietrich gives a refreshingly simple definition of the task before us; in trying to discover the Bible's unity, we want foremost to see "how it all fits together." Her challenge is reiterated by Bailey Sutton Dean, who suggests that man suffers in his knowledge of the Bible because he has no clear connected view of it.7

There is plenty of encouragement, however, for those who desire to see the over-all sweep of the Biblical drama. Rene Pache, author of TheInspiration and Authority of Scripture, writes:

"The inexperienced reader of the Bible may perhaps be struck at first by its diversity and multiplicity. But as soon as he has laid hold on some of the connecting elements and has become aware of the sturdy structure of the revelation, he will marvel at its profound unity." 8

In short, tracing out the Bible's unity will involve looking for relationship, continuity and solidarity between and among the various books of the Biblical record.

THE KIND OF UNITY FOUND IN SCRIPTURE

We hope you can see from the above discussion how the Christian layman can speak of the Bible as being one book, yet not be able to explain its unity when asked to do so. A proper understanding of the term "unity" can help overcome this situation. Unity can mean "singleness; a state of being one", or it can point to a relationship among parts. Nevertheless, if we are to grasp the concept of a har-
monious Scripture, we must recognize that there are actually two kinds of unity: organic and functional.

Look at the illustration below; the piece of chalk and the ball-point pen. Do you know which is organic and which is functional in its "oneness"? Which one exemplifies the kind of unity found in Scripture?

The chalk is organic in its oneness. That is, it is one essence all the way through. If you broke it in half--or in several pieces--each piece would still be nothing more and nothing less than compacted calcium carbonate! This organic unity is not the kind of oneness we find in the Biblical record!

Now, look at the pen. It is one pen, just as the chalk was one piece of chalk--yet it is radically different in its oneness. The pen, you see, has different components--ink, plastic, a metal clip, a spring, etc.--yet all function together to make one pen. If you take away any one part, you do not have a functional pen. Such is the nature of
the unity found in the Bible; it has 66 distinct parts, yet all function together to form one body of revelation. It's not just that the individual books complement one another; they need one another—just as the various parts of the human body (the eyes, the hands, etc.) need each other to function normally. It would not be too far-fetched to take Paul's human body—church body analogy (I Corinthians 12:12ff) and apply it to the situation we find in Scripture. Listen:

"If Esther shall say, Because I am not Isaiah, I am not of the Bible; is it therefore not of the Bible? And if Daniel shall say, Because I am not Ephesians, I am not of the Bible; is it therefore not of the Bible? If the whole Bible were prophecy, where would be the great convicting Law? And if the whole Bible were worshipping hymns, where would be the great historical narratives? But now hath God set the books of the Bible—each one of them—in the Bible, even as it pleased Him."

More than just an amusing analogy, we see from the above the nature of the unity of the Scriptures. It is great to memorize individual verses, to study specific books but, oh, when you begin to see how God has joined these many books together, you will have a new Book and a new appreciation for the Word of God. Louis T. Talbot, author of God's Plan of the Ages, asserts:

"There is more order and classification in the Bible than many people seem to suppose; in fact, the Bible is the unfolding of a great plan that was ever in the heart of the eternal God. And the only way to understand the details of His word is to have a clear understanding of it as a whole."
THE FOUNDATIONAL UNITY OF SCRIPTURE

Before we move on to the definitions of other terms involved in this study, it behooves us at this point to state what we believe to be the foundational unity of Scripture. Once we have identified this motif, we can look at the term "progress" in light of it, and also see how this unifying framework facilitates our understanding of the redemptive goal that unfolds throughout the Biblical record.

While we could consider a long list of Scriptural references to support and give credibility to our thesis, the very first verse of Scripture states in classic and succinct fashion what we believe ties together the many portions of God's Word. Look at it:

Genesis 1:1 -- "In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth..."

Do you see anything in Genesis 1:1 that you see elsewhere in Scripture? If you can tack down the common denominator in the following verses, you will have an excellent grasp of that unifying factor that permeates
God's written Word. What is the consistent aspect of the following verses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>Passage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 11:5,8</td>
<td>&quot;And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built... (and) the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 11:25</td>
<td>&quot;And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto (Moses), and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges 2:16</td>
<td>&quot;The Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra 1:1</td>
<td>&quot;The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you see for yourself what holds together the above verses? This is God's way of joining together the books of the Bible; do you see it? We could go into the New Testament and find the same thing, although space prohibits us from doing so here. Besides, we will be tracing out the connecting element from Genesis to Revelation once we embark upon our actual study together. For the present, however, may these sample and random verses suffice to clue you in on what we believe to be the foundational unity of Scripture.

If you don't see it—if you cannot isolate the unifying motif here—perhaps seeing these same verses stated in simple,
graphic form will make it significantly clear to you. This, then, is the essence of the verses we have considered above:

What is happening above? Robert MaAfee Brown, translator of the French work, *God's Unfolding Purpose* (by Dietrich), states quite succinctly what we believe to be the unifying element of the Biblical record. Brown declares the common witness of these various books, although written from different historical vantage points, to be this:

"THEY ALL RENDER AN ACCOUNT OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE LIVING GOD HAS BEEN AT WORK." 10

Such is the thesis we will implement in our study of the unity of Scripture. While we could trace doctrine or define the various periods of God's redeeming grace, or pursue a topical study, it is our conviction that there is nothing quite so dynamic in the Biblical record as the activity of God, the working of God in human history, the entrance upon earth of Him Who dwelled on high. In-
deed, Scripture—all of Scripture—reveals a God at work, a God who is doing something wonderful in the earth!

The Bible = AN ACCOUNT OF THE ACTIVITY OF GOD.

We need not pretend that this thesis is original with us or new in our day. F. John Scroggie, in his long-standing work, The Divine Programme in Human History, observed:

"(The Bible) stands out as a book of deeds, not stories." 11

Our intent in reviving this framework for viewing the unity of the Bible is not merely an academic pursuit, however. Nor is it merely a "How To" course in the handling of Scripture. Rather, it is an invitation to delight in the Lord, to echo afresh the psalmist's wonder: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:4). For who can fathom the personal presence of God Himself, tenting among His people, working for them and through them, without being overwhelmed by the measure of His love for mankind?

May God's Spirit, Who searches and knows the mind of God, give us wisdom and largeness of heart as we ponder the ways of the Majestic and Eternal Father.
UNITY OF SCRIPTURE: A SECONDARY FACTOR

It should be noted that we were speaking in generalities above when we said that all of Scripture records a God at work. In truth, only a certain kind of book in Scripture gives us specific details of God's redemptive activities. Unfortunately, many students of the Bible overlook this particular kind of book when looking for a personal blessing from God.

For example, would you rather spend an afternoon in First Chronicles or Ephesians? Would you ever consider the book of Hosea to be a refuge not unlike the book of Psalms when you need the assurance of God's unsearchable love for you? What kind of books are these, then, that tell us of God's marvelous intervention in the affairs of men?

Granted, there may be a few of you, but, really, how many of you enjoy studying...history? Was it your favorite subject in high school? That's the kind of book we must probe in the Biblical record if we are to fully understand God's purposes earthward! Books like Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth. And, yes, even
books like Samuel, Kings and Chronicles!

= the activity of God.

Now, if we were to stand the historical books of the Bible side by side, it would be readily observable that the Bible contains numerous volumes that are not historical in nature. In fact, look at all the volumes that would be excluded from our historical collection:

Law & Poetry & The Prophets

The Epistles & Revelation

How do these non-historical works fit into the overall unity of Scripture? We said that the historical books form the foundational unity of the Bible in that they record what God has done, is doing and has yet to accomplish until His program of redemption is finished.

In relation to this (God's action on earth), God has also spoken. He does not speak "out of the blue" or just for the sake of hearing Himself talk, however. Whenever God speaks, it is in direct relationship to His actions. His words (which we call "doctrine") either announce His intentions, or they explain, enlarge upon what He is about to do or has already done. The relationship of these two motifs—God's actions and God's speaking—are clearly evidenced in the following chart:
In our study, we will give prominence to the historical momentum of Scripture. Ernest F. Scott makes two interesting observations in this regard; that is, in regards to the historical significance of Christianity. He writes:

"Nothing is real but an event, and nothing can endure that has any other basis....God speaks to us through events, and it is by them that he works out his purpose." 12

Surely, the historical event is easier for us to grasp because it is concrete; it validates the verbal, if you will. The Christian faith itself, even though it includes a large body of doctrine (what God has said), nevertheless looks to a divine historic act (what God has done) as its foundation. Witness the Cross:
It is our thesis that all of Scripture involves either what God is saying or what God is doing, and such will serve as our framework for viewing the unity of Scripture:

God speaks ─── He's finished!

God acts ──── He's still working!

It is interesting to note at this point that Scripture itself often sets these two combined motifs before us. Not only so, but Scripture also suggests a definite relationship between what God says and what God does! That is, God never acts independently from nor contrary to what He has spoken. In other words, He does exactly what He said He will do.* That's a precious assurance, is it not?

Perhaps taking a cursory look at some of the passages that set forth these two concepts will facilitate the reader in seeing the significant relationship between what God says

*Indeed, this consistency can be found all through the Bible! Do you not marvel that these 66 books—written by different authors, at different times, in different styles and form, with different themes—do not in one respect contradict themselves in doctrinal, ethical and moral statements?! For example, when Isaiah speaks on an ethical issue, the apostle Paul does not later pen something to contradict what Isaiah wrote.
and does. The randomly chosen passages appear below:

**NUMBERS 23:19** — "Hath (God) said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?"

**AMOS 3:7** — "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing except He reveal His secret unto His prophets."

**ACTS 1:1** — "The former treatise have I made, 0 Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."

**ROMANS 4:20,21** — "(Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

**MATTHEW 11:4,5** — "Jesus said...Go and shew John what you both hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."
Matthew 11:4,5 is not the only place in Scripture where Jesus’ ministry is characterized exclusively by His words and His works. Indeed, these two lines—what Jesus said and what Jesus did—are the pervasive nature of His life on earth! Adolph Saphir states a supreme truth regarding this when he asserts:

"God visible is Jesus.
God audible is Jesus." ¹³

We will soon be tracing out these two unifying motifs of Scripture for ourselves, although we will have to look at each independently. If, however, the reader can discern what God is saying from Genesis to Revelation, and can fit that to what God is doing from Genesis to Revelation, he will possess one brand-new Book and, surely, will joy in God’s Written and Living Word more than ever.

PROGRESS: A DEFINITION

Quite simply, progress is an outworking of unity.
We have already identified the unity of Scripture as **GOD SPEAKING/GOD ACTING.**

Progress, then, has to do with **how** God speaks and **how** God does what He does. Do you know how important these issues are?

It's one thing to know what God is doing, and quite another to understand the **way** in which He is bringing His purposes to pass!

We've already alluded to the frustrations that can result when we have to work under an individual, and that individual doesn't do things the way we are used to doing them. Apparently that's what frustrated Moses when he involved himself in what God was doing and found himself in the middle of nowhere! Do you think Moses despaired? Scripture says that he cried out unto the Lord:

"Lord, I pray thee... shew me thy way, that I might know thee!" (Exodus 33:13)

Have you ever found yourself in Moses' situation? Have you ever cried out to God:
"Lord, I must know how you do things as well as what you are doing!"

To be sure, God doesn't do things the way we so often expect Him to: Isaiah 55:8 confirms that! But neither does God operate like an American. We are hooked on instant results, bright lights and getting the best the first time around. In fact, if Genesis had been written by an American, the opening verses probably would have read:

**GENESIS**

1:1

_In the beginning, God sent a Savior into the world, who quickly dealt with the sins of mankind, so that man could live happily ever after._

You may laugh at that, but, oh, how we need to see right now that God doesn't operate according to "the American way". If you don't settle that issue now, there will be times, as we trace God's redemptive operation on earth, when you will be utterly confused by His ways, and may even dare to think them senseless. But, now, on to our
definition of "progress".

\[
\text{progresso (Latin)} = \text{"to step forward".}
\]

You can see from the above definition that our English word "progress" comes from the Latin word "pro-gresso", which means "to step forward". Other ideas associated with the word include onward motion, advancement or making headway. These concepts are quite too narrow in meaning to adequately capture the essence of God progressing, however.

A better definition of progress is this:

\[
\text{progress} = \text{acorn}
\]

Actually, we are not trying to say that progress is an acorn! But the concept of progress is adequately expressed by an acorn. For example, what eventually happens to a little acorn? It becomes a mighty oak, right? How does it become a mighty oak? Instantaneously? Overnight? No....it grows. But, you might ask, isn't growth the same thing as stepping forward, advancing, making headway? Precisely! But there's a deeper aspect. Progress involves more than getting from \( \text{acorn} \) to \( \text{tree} \).
The aspect of progress which we are after—and which we want you to see and understand—can be seen in this next consideration. Think carefully before you answer the following question!

WHICH ITEM BELOW IS "FULLY TREE"?

| the acorn | or | the mature oak |

Dear reader, both are "fully tree"! You might be having difficulty accepting that statement in regards to the acorn, but any botanist will bear it out! The acorn is a mere seed, but that mere seed contains the whole tree! In other words, the seed has, compacted within it, everything that it will have at full maturity! Granted, when you examine the acorn, you cannot distinguish a trunk, branches, roots nor leaves—but they are all there, waiting to unfold and grow.

When God speaks, He begins small—with a seed. But in that initial word—that seed—is the entire future! When God acts, He begins small—with a seed. But that initial action envelopes the end of God’s entire redemptive venture!
Perhaps when you fully grasp this unique dimension of progress, you will better appreciate the author who described the book of Genesis as "the divine seed plot" for all that follows in Scripture.¹⁴

Indeed, Saphir, who pictured Jesus as God audible/God visible earlier in this chapter, also sees a progressive revelation in Scripture:

"In both Testaments, the beginning contains in germ everything that follows...All that is in the later historical books and in the prophets, is in the five books of Moses; and all that is in the Acts and in the epistles and in the Apocalypse is also in the four gospels." ¹⁵

In other words, Saphir is saying:

The seed of the OLD TESTAMENT is THE PENTATEUCH.

The seed of the NEW TESTAMENT is THE GOSPELS.

Other writers besides Saphir have touched on the concept of progressive revelation, but the author to whom we are most indebted to for this present work is the late Dr. Thomas Dehaney Bernard, and his classic work, The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament. Bernard's
book, though out of print today, developed the idea that a **progressive system of teaching** could be seen in the New Testament. That is, Bernard examined doctrine (God speaking), and saw a development and growth of truth from its seed form. Utterly fascinated by what he saw, Bernard penned the following words:

"Into all our parishes and all our missions the thousands of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sent forth with the Bible placed in their hands, and with solemn charges to draw from its pages the Gospel which they preach. But when those pages are opened they present, not the exposition of a revelation completed, but the records of a revelation in progress. Its parts and features are seen, not as arranged after their development, but as arranging themselves in the course of their development, and growing, through stages which can be marked and by accessions which can be measured, into the perfect form which they attain at last. Thus the Bible includes within itself a world of anticipation and retrospection, of preparation and completion, whereby various and vital relationships are constituted between its several parts. These relationships enter as really into the scheme of Scripture as do the several parts themselves, and must be rightly understood and duly appreciated if the doctrine, which the Book yields as a whole, is to be firmly grasped by the student or fairly presented by the preacher." 16

Although Bernard dealt solely with doctrine ("divine teaching or truth as communicated by God") and confined himself to the New Testament revelation, it is nevertheless his concept of progress that will superintend our study both of the historical operations of God and those sections of Scripture where God speaks extensively.
The concept of progress implies a goal. Remember the acorn we just considered? We said it becomes a mighty oak through the growth process, right? But, look, does it keep on growing? If it did, the story of "Jack and the Bean Stalk" wouldn't be such a novel tale!

Everything that grows—every living thing—has a point of maturity, an end, a consummation, a goal.

There are some mothers who say their teenage sons never stop growing (or eating)! Can you imagine what it would be like if their concern was literal?!

Fortunately, even human beings—who begin life as one cell—have a point of maturity, a point where they stop growing physically.
As we trace the Biblical record, you will be surprised at how often God begins with a small seed, which sprouts and develops into a major facet of His program. Consider the two examples below:

**GOD BEGINS WITH ONE INDIVIDUAL TO BUILD A NATION:**

Abraham → NATION

**GOD LAUNCHES WORLD EVANGELISM WITH 12 MEN:**

Disciples → WORLD EVANGELISM

There is no question that Scripture evidences one goal from Genesis to Revelation. One author states that goal as follows:

"The story of the Bible is primarily the story of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind. Everything else in the Bible is subsidiary or incidental to this main theme."
Truly, God is in the business of saving men—but men are being saved everywhere, every day—and yet God continues to pursue. Where is He headed that He presses on with such unbounded longing and mercy and love?

If you know where God is headed, what He is moving toward, all that happens in between will make more sense. In fact, in tracing out God's historical operation upon earth, it is imperative that the goal be ever kept in view. Remember the frustration we talked about that results when you don't understand how a person does what he does? It is just as vital to understand where they are going in their objectives.

As a consequence, we would like to set before you, in hypothetical form, what we believe is the ultimate goal of everything God is doing in Scripture. We believe this goal is more comprehensive and specific in nature than limiting the end desire of God to "saving men", although that idea is certainly included.

Moreover, we turn to Scripture itself for an
elucidation of this very goal:

"AS TRULY AS I LIVE, ALL
THE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED
WITH THE GLORY OF THE
LORD."
--Numbers 14:21

Do you see the full scope of this goal? Do you see the basis or guarantee on which it will succeed? Do you see where it is going to take place, and through what instruments? This is an incredible goal; it is a God-sized goal!

Look at that guarantee! God is saying with all certainty that ALL the earth shall be filled with His glory. How certain is the accomplishment of this goal? AS CERTAIN AS GOD IS ALIVE! Saphir tells the excellent greatness of this word:

"When God says, 'As I live, saith the Lord,' He thereby signifies that He is retreating, as it were, into His own depths, and that what He is going to promise is so connected with Himself, with His character, with His love, with His glory, with His purpose, that He Himself is the guarantee that it must come to pass."
Not only does the Lord guarantee the triumph of His plan with the propelling words, "As truly as I live", He also lists three other certainties that ought to make us shout:

1. Earth, not heaven, will be the target for the accomplishment of God's plans.

2. The goal involves the inhabitants of Earth.

3. The realization of this goal will be accomplished when there is a people on Earth filled with God.

We hope you see something very significant here. So often, Christians make heaven the ultimate of God's bliss, yet a quick review of the Lord's plans for Earth show that this small planet is distinguished above all others in the universe because of its holy destiny. God has chosen Earth for the display of His grand historical
operations.

Not only is Earth important to the fulfillment of God's purposes, but man--a special and peculiar kind of man. When Jehovah says His glory shall fill the whole earth, we don't think He is speaking of the Shekinah--the "unapproachable Light" (I Tim. 6:16) wherein the Lord Eternal dwells. Rather, we think this term speaks of holiness. God calls His people to be as He is: holy. A people filled with God reflect His character, and therefore bring glory to His Name. Saphir makes this astounding observation regarding the terms "glory" and "holiness":

"Glory is holiness manifested; holiness is glory concealed." 20

Can you imagine the whole Earth covered with a people who love God--who are like God--and who love their neighbors as themselves? Would you say we are already there?

As we leave these introductory matters, then, and move on into the actual record of God's divine activity, let us be reminded--and encouraged--that:

"God may at times appear to move very slow, but He is nevertheless sure to perform all He promised to do." 21
NOTES
INTRODUCTION (pp. 1-34)


6de Dietrich, p. 11.

7Dean, p. 1.


10de Dietrich, p. 13.


15Saphir, p. 196.


17Ibid., p. 4.

19Saphir, p. 254

20Ibid., p. 269.

21Kac, p. 23.
PART ONE

GOD ACTS

Prologue: Genesis 1 - 11

Act 1: Scene 1 Gen. 12 - 1 Kings 10
   Scene 2 1 Kings 11 - 2 Chronicles 36
   Scene 3 Ezra, Nehemiah, the Gospels

Act 2 Acts 1 - 28

Act 3 Prophecy
Prologue: Before the Drama Begins (Genesis 1-11)

This section gives those basic understandings apart from which the following drama is meaningless.

1. Creation and fall of man—Genesis 1-4
2. Destruction of man through the flood—Genesis 6-9

The above events are connected by the genealogies of chapters 5, 10 and 11:10-32
CHAPTER TWO: GENESIS 1-11

IN THE BEGINNING...

Every portion of Scripture is, to some degree, in sympathy with the heartbeat of God. That is the essence of its unity.

Stated another way, all of Scripture relates, in some way, to His ultimate goal, to the fulfillment of all His good pleasure. What is that goal? As stated in our introduction, we believe that Numbers 14:21 sets forth the sovereign and abiding passion of God:

"As truly as I live," saith the Lord, "all the Earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

In beginning our study of the unity of Scripture, then, it is our task to see how the various parts of the Bible reflect this historic and Earthward movement of the one Eternal God.
Indeed, as we examine the various portions of Scripture, our key question must be: "Is there anything in this section that indicates God is moving toward His goal?"

As such, no portion of Scripture will be viewed as a separate, detached entity; rather, we will review it from within the very sphere of Jehovah's activities.

As we look at the book of Genesis, for example, we must ask ourselves if there is any connection between what is happening in the pages of this particular book and the consummation of all history as God has defined it.
The best way to see this connection is to start by summarizing the content of the individual chapters, and writing brief titles or headings for them. In so doing, the student can ask himself—and see at a glance—what is spotlighted in all this history. Sample chapter titles for Genesis 1 through 11 appear below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Creation of the universe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Zoom lens: creation of man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Man disobeys/ consequences of sin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cain's sin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Genealogy: Adam to Noah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Earth entirely corrupt/ Flood planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Flood destroys all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Flood recedes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Post-Flood: new beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Genealogy: Noah and sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a</td>
<td>Tower of Babel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11b</td>
<td>Genealogy: Shem to Terah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you review the above, be sure to mark peculiarities in the author's writing, such as change in form, tone, direction or subject matter. Where, would you say,
is the most radical break in this segment of Scripture? Most people would place it at Genesis 3—but the author doesn't! True, Genesis 3 is radical in that it records man's fatal plunge into disobedience, but content-wise, the Fall of man is a logical sequel to the narrative in Genesis 2!

May we suggest that the most radical break in this segment of Scripture—both in content and form—comes in Genesis 5, 10 and the second half of 11:

Do you realize that we are studying a historical section of Scripture and, now, up pops, "This is the book of the generations of..."! Is God at work in a genealogy? What purpose do these genealogies serve, and how do they tie in with God's activities and His ultimate goal?
It is our contention that these genealogies, which cover extensive spans of time, serve two basic purposes in relationship to God's overall goal. First of all, they serve to link three key events which we believe to be the author's focal point in this section, and, secondly, they seem to suggest that little was happening during these interim years that was of any vital significance to the furtherance of God's activities upon the Earth.

You can see from the above illustration that we have "collapsed" the 11 chapters in this segment of Scripture and now have three main divisions. This method of handling Scripture (grouping chapters into more general
topic divisions) should be implemented throughout this study, although we will belabor the point only here. By collapsing broad spans of material, the student will be better able to grasp the general sweep of history throughout Scripture, and thus see its unity with greater clarity.

Let's look, then, at the three events that seem to be the major emphasis of this segment of Scripture. As we consider them generally here, we must keep in mind that the author is trying to tell us something about God's work on Earth through the recording of these particular events. We could label the events as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 1-11:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tower of Babel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mankind is scattered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin's results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you scan the general content above, do you see where any of this activity might have a bearing on what God desires to do on Earth? Oh, dear friends, you must understand what is happening here if Genesis 12 and the rest of Scripture is to make any sense!
Indeed, these three events have a crucial relationship to the plans of God for Earth! We must now see how they fit into the total picture of God's redeeming activity, and what impact they have upon the progressive thrust we have asserted is inherent in all that God does.

This will involve taking a closer look at Genesis 1 through 11. At present, we have only a hint that something very unusual is recorded in these brief chapters. And although we have singled out three key events that will hopefully tell us more about the author's intent, we have yet to see these events in the "zoom lens" fashion in which Scripture itself presents them.

In fact, once we have carefully observed the details and consequent direction of these three key segments, we will be able to collapse this entire portion of Scripture into one general statement. Therefore, instead of having 11 separate chapters, or even three distinct divisions, we will have one corporate "chapter" to deal with:

From the above, you can see that we believe Genesis 1 through 11 has only one thing to say in relationship to
God's Earthward desire! Do you know what that one thing is? Could you tell someone in one sentence how Genesis 1 through 11 fits into God's redemptive drama, and the reason for its inclusion in the script?

Hopefully, the ensuing pages will clarify the place and purpose these exciting chapters hold in relationship to the great working of God on Planet Earth. Indeed, it is anticipated that the reader, in viewing Genesis 1 through 11 afresh, will find these chapters to be the most phenomenal and indispensable histories ever written!

We turn now to that endeavor.
THE CONTENT OF GENESIS 1-11

As far as subject material is concerned, there is probably not in all of Scripture a segment of God's holy Word so incredible and selective in nature as Genesis 1 through 11.

With staggering brevity, God records:

* the origin of the universe (1:1-2:3)
* the creation of man (1:26-31; 2:7-25)
* human sin (3:1-7)
* redemptive revelation (3:8-24)
* the human family (4:1-15)
* godless civilization (4:1-15)
* the beginning of nations (10:1-32)
* the beginning of the Hebrew race (11:10 ff)\(^1\)

Indeed, such a barrage of information could be overwhelming if not handled aright. You see, the scientific mind has become bogged down here, unable to dislodge itself from what was intended as a mere cosmological briefing. The technological and intellectual mind have likewise suffered casualties in this portion of Scripture, all while pursuing answers to questions that are incidental to the purpose of the writing!

Let us say again that the unity of Scripture is an account of the acts of God as they relate to/move towards His ultimate goal. Sad to say, but a person
can have full knowledge of this goal, and yet miss its obvious unfolding in Scripture! The Bible becomes a mundane "la, la, la" for this person. But the reader who knows the goal and purposes to look for it will find himself interjecting "aha! aha!" throughout the whole Biblical record! For him, the Bible will become powerfully alive and exciting.

We said earlier that Genesis 1 through 11 was very selective in its historicity. This is true of all Scripture. God focuses only on those facts, events, places and figures which lend to the development—not of general history—but of His Story. The unity of the Bible becomes more defined when we are able to detect where God Himself identifies, underscores or emphasizes important elements of His goal.

What does that mean in terms of Numbers 14:21 and Genesis 1 through 11? First of all, we know
from Numbers 14:21 that God's activities have three basic dimensions:

1. God's redemptive operation is to be culminated on the Earth.

2. God's program involves people.

3. God's purposes can only be realized through godly people.

What, then, do we want to watch for in Genesis 1 through 11? Obviously, some reference to Earth, since Earth has been selected as the center stage for the divine drama. Why should Scripture interest itself in Mars or number the galaxies of heaven when God is about to do something on Earth?! Do you see now the reason behind the selective nature of Genesis 1:1?

"In the beginning, God created...the earth."
Indeed, while one reads the rapid-fire account, not only of Earth's formation, but the bursting forth of grass and trees, the arranging of lunar and solar lights, the abundant stocking of the aquatic bodies, the speckling of the sky with winged fowl—all at the command of "Let it be!"—one cannot help but compare this hurried activity to that of a director anxious to get every piece of scenery into place before Curtain Time.

And so it is: Earth—one of the three necessary dimensions of God's operation—takes the spotlight in the very first verse of Genesis. But there are other things we know to look for. As Saphir keenly observes:

"The Bible anticipated that the whole earth would be inhabited, that the uttermost ends of the earth would be peopled, and that the whole earth would be united in knowledge and worship of one God, and in righteousness..." 2

In light of the above, the following verses in the Genesis account become paramount:

"And God said, 'Let us make man...!'" —Genesis 1:26

"And the Lord God...made a woman, and brought her unto the man."

—Genesis 2:22

"And God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...!'"

—Genesis 1:28
Where, again, is God's plan to be executed? Earth! Who will be drawn into His purposes? People! Do you see now why the Chinese theologian, the late Watchman Nee, celebrated the majestic significance of the verses we have before us with these words?

"If we know God's plan, every time we read the word 'man' or the word 'earth', our hearts should leap within us." 3

Indeed, we have urged the reader to begin to develop the ability to detect when God underscores particulars of His goal. Do you see it in the creation account of man? Let's look more closely at that supreme event:

Genesis 1:26—"And God said, Let there be people upon the earth: and it was so."

You may smile at that if you want, but so many students of Scripture lump the creation of man in with the "scenery" and props we just talked about. God doesn't. The Biblical narrative itself does not. Indeed, man is not as Shakespeare pictured him: "a poor player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more." 4 Rather, man's high distinction from the rest of the creation is found in the
fact that "God lavished all His care upon the creature who was to be most like Himself." 5

Now watch. Do you see how the creation of man, in God's image, is vital to the third aspect of His goal?

3 God's purposes can only be realized through godly people.

What characterizes godly people? Quite simply, the character of God! If the earth is to be filled with God's glory, then men must be filled with God; they must love Him, obey Him, believe Him. They must be holy, even as God is holy.

They must also be kind to one another, tenderhearted, preferring one another in love. Does Genesis 1 through 11 have any information to substantiate either or both of these: men who love God and who love one another?

We have already seen how two conditions of God's goal--Planet Earth and people--have been quickly met. Would you say there is definite progress in this? Indeed, God's own evaluation up to this point is: "Very good!" (Genesis 1:31).

In light of the above declaration, one can understand why the wretched report in Genesis 3 through 11 caused the innermost being of God to retreat, as it were, into the comforting balm of His own immeasurable pity.
Can God's purposes proceed when the very core of man's being riots against Him?

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Genesis 3:6)

Can God work through those who sense an estrangement from Him?

"...and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God..." (Genesis 3:8)

Can God be glorified through people who are out of sorts with one another?

"And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Genesis 3:12)

"Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." (Genesis 4:8)
Is there any hope of righteousness reigning over all the Earth in view of Genesis 6:12?

"And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."

Do you think God can proceed with his heart-authored plan when Scripture says:

"It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." (Genesis 6:6)

Can we say God is hastening towards His goal in light of Genesis 7:21?

"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth...and every man."

Unfortunately, even Genesis 9, which publishes the "new beginnings" after the Flood, does not present a true horizon of hope—-for here we find Noah drunk and his son making a spectacle of his father's nakedness!

By the time we get to Genesis 11 (the tower of Babel), it is clear that man is not only individually at odds with Jehovah, but an entire society reflects
a sickening attitude of "Let's gang up against God!" In direct opposition to Jehovah's purposes, man wants to stay clustered together, in one place, instead of obeying God's command to replenish all the earth. And look at man's primary motivation for building the tower of Babel: to make a name for himself, not God!

In view of the above facts, would you say that Genesis 1 through 11 serves as an encouraging introduction to the certainty of God's plan being accomplished—not only on Earth—but through people such as these?!

Watchman Nee touches upon a critical need here in the following observation:

"When man is gained by God, God's plan is accomplished." 6

Indeed, the unanimous testimony of Genesis 1 through 11 is this: God has not gained man! He is utterly corrupt, entertaining evil in his heart continually. He has no regard for the plans of God...nor for His Person! And he is headed in the opposite direction from where God desires to go:
But wait! Did we not say earlier that all Scripture in some way relates to God's ultimate goal and the fulfillment of His good pleasure? How, then, can we reconcile Genesis 1 through 11 with the rest of Scripture? How does it fit into the scheme of things?

Before we answer the question of how this segment fits in, it might be better to ask ourselves what it would be like if God had deleted this portion of His Word—if Genesis 1 through 11 had been left out of the Biblical record. Have you ever considered that? You see, without the information given in Genesis 1 through 11, neither Genesis 12 nor the rest of the Bible makes any sense!

The primary function of Genesis 1 through 11, then, is this: it sets the stage for what comes after! One author put it this way:

"These pages show man's desperate need, and, consequently, the need for God to act." 7

Perhaps you have noticed that we have frequently used theatrical terms in this section: referring to God's redemptive operation as a "drama"; likening the creation account to the placement of "scenery" before "Curtain Time", etc. Many authors depict the Bible as a great unfolding drama. Many also depict Genesis 1 through 11 as a prologue to this great redemptive drama.

In the theater world, a prologue is an introduction that sets the stage for the opening scene. In an actual
dramatic production, for example, the prologue is used to give the audience all the necessary information it needs for understanding the opening scene and the action that unfolds throughout.

Genesis 1 through 11 makes one thing clear: man has failed miserably. He has dashed to pieces any dreams of his exaltation or forward progress. In short, Genesis 1 through 11 calls for a radical shift in the course of events.

That radical shift comes in Genesis 12, which we believe is the opening curtain on the acts of God. Says one author:

"In the order of printing, the first verse of the Bible is Genesis 1:1; but in the order of history and spiritual development it is Genesis 12:1."

G. Ernest Wright concurs with the above by suggesting that:

"These first chapters of Genesis constitute the prologue to the great acts of God which begin with Abraham and together enunciate the unifying theme of the Bible."

Indeed, the Genesis Prologue is a vital record. It helps us to understand what precipitated—what necessary—
tated--the dynamic intervention of Almighty God in the affairs of men. It shows the depth of deprivation to which man will plunge when left on his own--and it establishes the need for redeeming grace and a work of God that embraces the entire world!

If you contrast Genesis 1-11 (the Prologue) with Genesis 12 and following (the actual Drama), the differences in context and momentum are quickly evident. The over-all flavor of the Prologue is negative, and every new scene seems to fall behind God's purposes--and even hinder them--instead of serving to facilitate God's goal for earth. We have tried to summarize the basic qualities of the Prologue and the actual Drama below in order that the reader can see for himself the sharp contrast between the two divisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 1-11 vs. Genesis 12ff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Prologue:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative......................positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regressive.....................progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man's efforts..................God intervenes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, in light of the above, we must insist that Genesis 12 is the opening curtain on the acts of God. Here-tofore, God has only acted to restrain sin and to judge. But something tremendous is about to happen in Genesis 12 that will alter man's plight and advance God's desires. Watch! The lights are being dimmed; the action is set in motion. God Himself is about to enter the realm of human destiny to act on behalf of fallen man!
PART I: GOD ACTS
NOTES
PROLOGUE
(pp. 35-55)


4William Shakespeare, Macbeth.


6Nee, p. 9.


Scene 1 - God builds a nation as His channel for providing redemption
- promised in Genesis 12:1-3
- accomplished as recorded in Genesis 12 through 1 Kings 10 in the following progressive steps:

1. Patriarchs
   - Abraham - Genesis 12-24
   - Isaac - Genesis 25-27
   - Jacob - Genesis 27-49
2. Tribal framework - Genesis 30 (49:28)
3. People - Exodus 1
Building of a Nation, cont.

4. Leader - Exodus 2-4
5. Deliverance from Egypt - Exodus 5-15
6. Constitution for nation - Exodus 20; Deuteronomy
7. Land
   a. Failure - Numbers 13-36 (Deuteronomy 1)
   b. Victory
      - conquest of land - Joshua 1-12
      - division of land - Joshua 13-24
8. Tribes established in the land - Judges
   a. Tribes take their inheritance - Judges 1
   b. Judges as deliverers - Judges 2-16 (These are temporary, local leaders)
   c. need for a king (see Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; and 21:25)
      - idolatry - Judges 17-18
      - immorality - Judges 19-21
   d. Ruth - the Moabitess becomes the grandmother of the King (see Ruth 4:18-22)
9. Samuel, The Prophet-Judge - 1 Samuel 1-7
   a. Samuel established as Prophet - 1 Samuel 1-3
      (See 3:19-21)
   b. Samuel established as Judge - 1 Samuel 4-7
      (See 7:15-17)
10. Monarchy - 1 Samuel 8-31
    a. demand for a king - 1 Samuel 8
    b. God gives them Saul - 1 Samuel 9-12
    c. Saul's failure - 1 Samuel 13-31
11. The Theocracy - 2 Samuel through 1 Kings 10
    a. David - Victory in war
       - called - 1 Samuel 16
       - trained - 1 Samuel 17-31 (See 24:5-7 and 26:8-12)
       - reigning - 2 Samuel 2-24
    b. Solomon - peace and prosperity - 1 Kings 1-10
       (See Joshua 24:1-13, Nehemiah 9:5-31 and Acts 7:2-50 for summaries of this)
CHAPTER 3: THE DRAMA BEGINS

THE OPENING SCENE

Genesis 12. This is where the curtain rises on the mighty acts of God and, here, the drama of redemption properly begins. And, oh, that even now, a hush would sweep across the audience—for nowhere else will mankind ever find an opening scene...nor opening lines...with such sublime and terrible significance as these.

As one author has observed:

"It is here (Genesis 12) that God turns from the race to a man—Abraham—from whom there was to arise the miracle of history." 1

Indeed, Watchman Nee calls Genesis 12 "the divine starting point of recovery." 2 He notes:

"We begin with Abraham because the divine plan of redemption begins with Abraham...he is the starting-point of everything in redemption and in the purpose of God." 3
We earlier quoted one writer's view that Genesis 12:1 is the only true and legitimate beginning of Biblical history. We, ourselves, would go so far as to suggest that Genesis 12 probably constitutes the most radical break in all of Scripture. Let us explain.

Everyone is familiar with the years that separate the Old and New Testaments, but even the concluding words of the Old Testament and the first words of the New have more continuity than what we find between Genesis 11 and 12! Consider, for example, the fact that the Old Testament ends with the promise and expectation of a Messiah, and, despite the 400 years of silence inbetween, the gospel record announces what?--the advent of that same Messiah!

On the other hand, God is doing a new thing in Genesis 12. The events in this opening scene are not a continuation of the preceding text; they are the commencement of that plan whereby God will bring His purposes to full consummation! Do you see for yourself why we consider this such a radical shift?
Indeed, if this seems but a small thing to you—that God’s redemptive enterprise begins with the call of Abraham—consider the astounding attention Scripture itself gives to this particular event. A.J. Pollock, in his book, *The Amazing Jew*, marvels at the statistics:

TEN WORDS,

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1)

suffice to introduce us to the creation of the universe.

FIVE WORDS—

"He made the stars also" (Gen. 1:16)

suffice to tell us about the millions of the heavenly bodies....yet no less than

THIRTEEN AND A HALF CHAPTERS

in the book of *Genesis* are devoted to the life of Abraham!

In the *Genesis* Prologue (chapters 1 through 11), we saw that the entire human race was without hope and
bound for hell. When the curtain rises on Genesis 12, therefore, we need the sober reminder that "man is not on trial (here); he is under sentence". Knowing this dismal fact, would you do what God did? He appeared to a man--an idolator, no less--and announced the equivalence of the following incredible words:

"I am not going to work a sudden miracle from heaven; I shall work through you."

Indeed, it should overwhelm us that God would limit Himself in this way and choose, seemingly always, to work through an individual--yet Scripture everywhere confirms that God delights in pouring into earthen vessels the treasure of His holiness and excellent power.

And we need to mark this well, for it will be a consistent method of operation in God's program. That is, whenever God desires to do something, He will look for a man! Particularly in this opening scene--wherein God announces no less than His complete strategy for filling the whole earth with His glory--we ought to marvel, as does G. Campbell Morgan, that "God's vantage ground was a man!"
THE CHARTER OF SALVATION

We said that Genesis 12 is the opening scene wherein God announces, as it were, His charter of salvation—His working plan of redemption. Perhaps the magnificence of that escapes us, and we need to ponder afresh the fact that three mere verses—three!—reveal the whole counsel of God to us!

The comments of S.B. Frost should restore our wonderment:

"This Promise (Gen. 12:1-3) once given dominates the whole story, and not of the patriarchal period only...(It's fulfillment is) the great eschatological hope of the whole Bible." 10

Another author attaches this import to these three pregnant words from God:

"What in the Bible precedes this text is introduction, and all that follows, to the last chapter of Revelation, is the story of the development and fulfillment of this Promise." 11

The testimony of both these authors, then, is the incredible fact that we will find nothing new in Scrip-
ture—nor in God's intent—beyond what is stated in this brief, yet expansive, Constitution! Truly, Genesis 12:1-3, is an example of progressive revelation, as we have defined it!

As we turn to Genesis 12:1-3 to see what God is actually about to do, it might benefit us to ask ourselves what we would do at this point. Man, you will recall, has sinned and grieved God sore and has chosen death over an eternal destiny. What would be your remedy for this ugly mess?

Oh, yes—in our theological sophistication, and our familiarity with Scripture, we acknowledge God's response here; but if we were truthful with ourselves and our inability to comprehend His ways, we would more readily admit our utter shock at God's course of action. Listen, as Scripture reveals the sovereign strategy:
The Constitution
for the
Recovery of Man:

And God said to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation."
--Genesis 12:2

What?! a nation? Men are dying and going to hell, and God elects to build...a nation?! Surely, you would agree, the urgency of the hour demands a great evangelist, at least--if not a Savior--no? Do we dare express our perplexity at this point: "Lord, why a nation"?

Indeed, in this situation, and in many others to come, God's answer rings in our ears, as we warned that it would:

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord."

--Isaiah 55:8
But we also have this encouragement: that everything God does pertains to His goal...including the building of a nation! What, again, is God's ultimate aim? to fill all the Earth with His glory. Might we suggest that the building of a great nation has something to do with the nature of God's final goal?

Let's consider another aspect of God's promise to Abraham:

"And the Lord said to Abraham, 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'" (Genesis 12:3)

Do you see the world-wide impact of Abraham's calling? Does this promise give any indication that God had His ultimate goal in mind when He spoke these words? All the families. All the earth. Blessed.

Why a nation? We can only suggest, at this point, that the building of a nation is a progressive step toward the fulfillment of God's desire for Earth. It is not the climax of that goal--but it is crucial to the realization of God's purposes. We must trust, as we trace the development of this nation in the historical record,
that God will surely reveal how this step serves His greater glory.

SOME ADDITIONAL SEEDS

Thus far, we have only looked at two aspects of God's promise to Abraham. We must grant here that the very word "promise" connotes God is speaking, and not yet working. Nevertheless, the content of the Promise relates to what God is about to do. For that reason, we would like to briefly consider the other dimensions of this word in order that we might watch for their unfolding in Scripture.

Listed below, then, are all the major seed-thoughts of God's redemptive program, and of His promise to Abraham:

- I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION.
- I WILL BLESS THEE.
- I WILL MAKE THY NAME GREAT.
- I WILL MAKE YOU A BLESSING TO OTHERS.
- I WILL BLESS YOUR ALLIES AND CURSE YOUR ENEMIES.
- I WILL BLESS ALL PEOPLES OF THE EARTH THROUGH YOU.

While we cannot elaborate on each of these, be mindful of the words, "I will." Whenever Jehovah says, "I will", He is really saying: "This is what I am going to do; be sure of it!"
GOD'S PLEDGE: I WILL MAKE A NATION

We know from Genesis 12:2, then, that God's first priority in the redemption of mankind is to build a nation. And, perhaps because we also know, and believe, that "nothing is impossible with God", this goal may seem, shall we say, not so extraordinary. This is sad.

To be sure, one of the misfortunes of being too familiar with Scripture is the fact that we ignorantly rob both God and His mighty deeds of glory and awe...and miracle. You see, Jehovah did not say, "I will make a nation". His words, rather, were directed toward a man. Listen, again, to the incredible opening lines:

"And the Lord said to Abram, 'I will make of thee a great nation.'"

Do you see the wonder here? Or have you ever considered how small...how silly...this beginning actually appears? Abraham is one man. A very old man. The husband of a wife who is...barren. Would you begin to build a nation this way, through this man?

GOD: I will start with to build this:

* one person
  - brittle in age
  - dead in body
  - without hope of heirs
Why does God work this way? Perhaps it is so no one else can ever take credit for what gets done. "I will" means that God alone is going to do it. Oh, yes--He will work through a man--and sometimes, in the program of God, that man erroneously thinks that he is making the way successful--but it is God.

Indeed, as we consider Act I shortly--the building of a great nation--we will see Abraham struggle with this very concept. Moses will struggle with it. But, ah, down the road apiece, there is a young shepherd...a psalmist...who will see both the awe--and advantage--of Jehovah's theocratic undergirding.

For now, though, we must hasten on to that opening scene wherein God begins His mighty operation. The lights have already been dimmed in an effort to arrest audience expectation. And, now, as the curtain rises, we are about to witness the unfolding of a great nation. God has begun working; you can be sure of it!

ACT 1-SCENE 1
GOD BUILDS A NATION THROUGH ABRAHAM

It is our thesis, you will recall, that God works progressively. We know from Genesis 12:2 that God's work schedule for Act 1, Scene 1 involves the building of a
great nation. His pledge to Abraham, then, is the seedbed from which this mighty undertaking emerges. And, since we know where God is going, Scripture should both testify and validate that a nation, indeed, has been born and is beginning to develop and grow.

The record we find in Genesis 12 through I Kings 10 (which, by the way, is Act I, Scene I of this drama) tells of God's success in this enterprise:

Moreover, the very existence of the Nation Israel in our day persuades us that the work of God endures forever. But, oh, the real exciting aspect of this Nation is how God brought it into existence, not just that He brought it into being. In tracing the unity of Scripture, remember, our goal is not only to see what God is doing, but, also, to see the way in which He brings His purposes to fruition.

Scene One in God's redemptive drama records 11 steps
in the building of the Hebrew nation. We now turn to the incredible story.

**STEP ONE: THE FOUNDING FATHERS**

*(Genesis 12-50)*

At the close of Genesis 11, one can see the final curtain lowering on the acts of mankind. His was a bad show, by any critic's standards of review. But God, in Genesis 12, starts with a brand new cast, and brings to the world stage a truly magnificent production.

His drama begins, in fact, with an "actor's profile" on His three principle characters: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in addition to much detail on the supporting role played by Joseph. Indeed, one should be aware of the marked difference in the content of Genesis 1 through 11 and that of Genesis 12 through 50.

We have already observed that the Genesis Prologue, although it covers a broad sweep of history and hundreds of years, is an amazingly brief record! The efforts of the entire human race are summed up in a mere eleven chapters! But, beginning in Genesis 12, the focus shifts from the world to four individuals—with Scripture devoting several chapters of biographical material on each man!
And what strange biographies we have above! Have you ever contemplated the selective nature of the material Scripture gives us on these men, particularly the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? These are not biographies, after all! At least not in the true sense of the word. In fact, the information we are told about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will make sense only in terms of the goal announced earlier: God is building a nation that will serve as His channel of redemption on Planet Earth.

So, then, what do we actually know about Abraham from Scripture? Basically, three things:

1. God made a covenant with him. (Genesis 13: 14-17)
2. Information about his wife is integrated throughout his life history. (Genesis 12:5ff)
3. He desired a baby. (Genesis 15:2)

And Isaac? We are told essentially the same three things:

1. God renewed the covenant He had made with Abraham with Isaac. (Genesis 26:24)
2. He obtains a wife through Divine guidance. (Genesis 24)
3. He entreats the Lord for a baby. (Genesis 25:21)

Jacob's "biography" reads the same:

1. God renews the "Abrahamic Covenant" with him. (Genesis 28:12-15)
2. His wives, Leah and Rachel, are an integral part of God's purposes for him. (Genesis 29)
3. A tension ensues between Jacob's wives as to which one can give him...a baby! (Genesis 30)

What on earth does all this—a Covenant, wives, babies!—have to do with building a great nation? Well, first of all, we need to examine the specifics of the Covenant that Jehovah made with these three men. God had promised Abraham, you will recall, that a great nation would issue from him. But a nation calls for what? First of all, people; and, secondly, land. And that is what the Abrahamic Covenant is all about!

"And the Lord said to Abram...Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

—Genesis 13:14,15
Keep in mind, too, that the Covenant blessings were not confined to Abraham alone—or even Abraham's seed—but had a circumference that encircled the entire world:

"And in thee (=thy seed) shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

--Genesis 12:3

Do you see now why a baby was so important to Abraham? Sure, God had promised that his descendants would be "as the dust of the earth" (Genesis 13:16), but the historical record tells us that 25 years after God had made this promise, Abraham was still without an heir! That's a quarter of a century, friends! Does that tell you anything about the way in which God works?

Indeed, one of the fatal consequences of not understanding how God works is the fact that man is prone to take things into his own hands—a brass implication that God needs a little human help to be successful! Such was Abraham and Sarah's remedy when God seemed to fail in providing a child for them (Genesis 16). The story of Sarah's handmaid, Hagar, is a familiar if not a tragic one. As one commentator observes:

"The swift transition from the magnificent outreaching of faith in chapter 15 ('And Abraham believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness') to the attempt to force the hand of God in this chapter is all too human."
Even so, we should not be too hard on Abraham, for even when Isaac, that "son of promise", finally arrives—as God said he would—one child can hardly be considered a nation! Nor can one child be seen as the fulfillment of Jehovah's word to Abraham regarding his descendants!

Do you understand now the awesome dilemma Abraham faced when Jehovah asked him to sacrifice this "only son"? It wasn't just that Isaac was Abraham's first legitimate off-spring; he was the first member of that multitude promised by God! To eliminate Isaac was, literally, to destroy the hope of a nation!

It's strange, but Scripture does not record the internal agony that Abraham must have suffered in this test. We know only that he must have learned from his blunder in chapter 16—for his obedience in this situation not only shows that he was beginning to understand the ways of God; he was also fully assured that God would not renege on His promise nor fail to perform it. When it appeared that Isaac would be sacrificed, Abraham looked at the young boy and said, simply: "My son, God will provide..." (Genesis 22:8)
Well, what we have considered so far makes for
great preaching, but the question must be asked, "Is
this progress?!" God has promised to make a great nation
from Abraham...to bless him with numerous seed—but what
does Abraham have after a quarter of a century? One son!

The Promise is repeated to Isaac and Jacob, but
what does God give them? Barren wives!

"And Rebekah's family blessed her, and said
unto her...'Be thou the mother of thousands of
millions...' (but) Isaac entreated the
Lord for his wife, because she was barren."

(--Genesis 24:60; 25:21)

"And (Jacob) went into Rachel...but Rachel
was barren."

(--Genesis 29:30,31)

Do you realize that God is on His way to build
a great nation—and He starts out with three barren
women! Would you do it that way? We have already alluded
to why God operates as He does. From first to last, the
building of this great nation will be His undertaking.
Abraham's wife was too old to have children. Rebekah's
womb was closed. Rachel could not conceive. But God
is faithful to perform His word:

"And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said,
and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken.
For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son
in his old age..." (Genesis 21:1,2)
"And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah...conceived...And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb." (Genesis 25:21, 24)

"Now the sons of Jacob were twelve..." (Genesis 35:22)

Ah! this is progress, is it not? From one son, to twins, to twelve boys? Yes, it is progress, but we must guard against spiritualizing here--for twelve people do not make a nation anymore than one person does!

In addition, if one reads Genesis carefully, this "progress" doesn't look as hopeful as first thought. Why? First of all, we learn that God rejects one of Rebekah's twins (which leaves us with one son again!) Secondly, we learn that Jacob's family (twelve sons) is faced with the threat of extinction due to a severe famine that is about to occur in the land! (Genesis 41:54).

So what is God trying to underscore in this record? Perhaps only this: that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have been chosen as the "founding fathers"--the architects of the Nation Israel. It is from these three men that God will build a great nation. It is through these three men that He will somehow fulfill His desire to enshrine His presence on Earth. This is no small distinction, as Watchman Nee observes:
"Indeed, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob hold a special status in the providence of God and one not held by any others. Theirs is the privilege of leading us all to God in a unique way." 13

If you are not yet convinced that these three men form the headship of that nation through which God will extend His mercy to mankind, consider how God Himself puts them a bar above all others mentioned in the Bible. That is, have you ever considered the significance of the phrase used by God to introduce Himself—universally—to the peoples of the earth?

It is an amazing thing, and one that deserves our notice—for God, in making Himself known to mankind, does not use a title of power; He uses an association with people. He declares Himself not as "the god of thunder" or "the god of fire"—but "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"! Even Noah and Enoch, men who walked with God, did not bear this distinction! You never hear of Jehovah being addressed as "the God of Noah" or "the God of Enoch".

What does this all mean? How important are these patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—in the purposes of God? We quote Saphir, who seems to capture the enormous significance of these three men in just a few lines:

"In the covenants which God in His sovereignty made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...are all the dealings of His grace and all the purposes of His kingdom." 14
Most nations, including America, have key historic figures very much akin to Israel's three patriarchs or "founding fathers", as we have called them. These figures—whether explorers, forefathers or kings—are foundational to nationhood. Indeed, such persons not only authenticate "beginnings", they also foster solidarity and nationalism—vital signs for any growing federation.

In God's program, however, it is not just Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who preserve national identity and perpetuate the sovereign destiny of Israel. Beyond this triad headship, Scripture immortalizes another body or instrument through which God will work out His divine purposes: the 12 tribes of Israel.

Are you familiar with the names "Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin"? Yes, they are the 12 sons of Jacob, but not only so. In Genesis 49, a dying father gathers these twelve sons to his bedside to pronounce a final blessing on them. If you read the actual account, you would see that Jacob addresses each son individually, but note what is said about this family at the end of Jacob's blessing!
"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them... every one according to his blessing..." — Genesis 49:28

Has Jacob gathered 12 tribes to his side in this scene? Of course not! The nation is still in embryonic form—not yet born. What we have here is a seed: these 12 sons are the beginning of that federation of Israelites that will develop and grow throughout the Biblical record—even to the last book of the Bible! (Revelation 7, for example, describes the sealing of 144,000 servants of God—taken from... the 12 tribes of Israel!)

Although we do not have time to pursue the progressive element in Jacob's blessings upon his sons in Genesis 49, may the comments of Merrill F. Unger sustain our observation that God often deposits truth in seed form and then expands its meaning throughout the rest of Scripture:

"(Jacob) assembled his 12 sons to prophesy their tribal future. This (prophecy) covers in a remarkable manner the entire sweep of Israelite history—past, present and future." 15

In other words, Unger is saying that one prophecy, consisting of 24 verses, given to 12 people, embraces the whole story of the Hebrew nation that will unfold
throughout the Biblical record! To be sure, this tribal framework is an important aspect in God's plans—and seems vital to the establishment of these particular people as a nation.

**ZOOM LENS ON JOSEPH**

We cannot emphasize enough the need for the reader to sensitize himself to peculiarities in the written record of God's doings. The life of Joseph, one of Jacob's 12 sons, is a case in point.

This man was not a patriarch, nor did God make a covenant with him—yet his 13-chapter "biography" in Genesis puts him in the same lime-light with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abraham</th>
<th>Isaac</th>
<th>Jacob</th>
<th>Joseph - 13 chs.</th>
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<tr>
<td>13½ chs.</td>
<td>8 chs.</td>
<td>10 chs.</td>
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After examining the strange "biographies" of the patriarchs, we saw, at least, that the events surrounding their lives were crucial to God's plans going forth. They were to be progenitors of a great, innumerable nation!
But what about Joseph's biography? The three elements we found in the record of the patriarchs is not there! No involved story about a wife, no mention of a covenant, no cry for an heir. Why, then, has God called our attention to the life of this man?

For sure, everyone is familiar with the story snatched up by every Sunday School journal--the story of Joseph's coat of many colors. But, look, knowing how earnestly God presses toward His goal of redeeming mankind, would He really devote 13 chapters of His precious Word just to tell us an ugly story about sibling rivalry or parental favoritism? No! We said--and repeat again--that every portion of Scripture is in sympathy with the heartbeat of God--including Genesis 37 to 50!

So, then, our next step is to pinpoint the major focus of the narrative and determine where the sphere of action takes place. Without a doubt, Scripture spotlights Joseph's life in Egypt, beginning with his being sold into slavery there; then, his imprisonment and, finally, his eventual exaltation. And, now, the crucial question: What does Egypt have to do with God's program, if anything?

Genesis 46:3 holds the answer. Read it carefully:

"And God spake unto Israel (Jacob) in the visions of the night, and said..."Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation."
Ah! It all fits now, doesn't it? Do you see now why such a large section of Genesis is devoted to Joseph? Unger states the reason with precise brevity:

"Joseph was the link between the family of Israel and the nation of Israel."

If there had been no Joseph, there would have been NO NATION! Jacob's family surely would have succumbed to the seven-year famine in Egypt if God had not found a man to preserve this vulnerable family:

"By his God-given wisdom and foresight, Joseph was able to save the Egyptians from starvation and to grant to his kindred, his eleven brothers and their families, a haven in Goshen, the richest portion of Egypt. Thus we see the hand of God overruling, leading and blessing the seed of Abraham."

Does the story of Joseph have anything to do with the desire of God? Indeed, Joseph himself offers the best commentary on the strange events surrounding his life. One cannot help but notice, as Joseph speaks to his brothers, that Joseph is humbly aware of his role in the redemptive work of a loving God:
"It was not you that sent me hither, but God. God did send me before you to preserve life...to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance."

--Genesis 45:8,5,7

Preservation, of course, is not the same thing as progress. So it is, in the record of Joseph's life, we find no enlargement or growth in God's plan to build a nation. His intent is merely kept intact. But Step Three is a different story entirely!

STEP THREE: PEOPLE!!!!!!
(Exodus 1)

You might be wondering why we have used five exclamation points above. We do...because God does—as we shall see in just a moment. But, first, let us look at verse one in the opening chapter of the book of Exodus. It is clear from this verse that Jacob and his 11 sons did arrive in Egypt, to be with their brother Joseph, and to prosper. In fact, Scripture gives the total family count as "70 souls" in verse 5.
Granted, we could call this increase in family size "progress", and yet, 70 people still do not make a nation, let alone a great nation! Moreover, verse 6 looms as the printed obituary to such a notion:

But, ah, remember our five exclamation points? They are in verse 7 of Exodus 1:

And the children of Israel:

were FRUITFUL!

and INCREASED ABUNDANTLY!

and MULTIPLIED!

and WAXED EXCEEDING MIGHTY!

and the land was FILLED with them.
Do you realize the dynamic quality of verse 7? God uses no less than five different expressions to tell us one thing: THE ISRAELITES ARE GROWING AS A PEOPLE!

But, look, we don't really know how many Israelites there are, now do we? Scripture fails to give us the actual statistics. Nonetheless, we know this: the population explosion was of such a proportion that it staggered the mind of Egypt's new king!

"And (Pharaoh) said to his people, 'Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we!'" —Exodus 1:9

And be careful to mark Pharaoh's strategy against this growth, because:

**IT IS THE FIRST TIME IN THE BIBLICAL RECORD THAT WE FIND HUMAN OPPOSITION TO WHAT GOD IS DOING!**

By afflicting the Israelites, Pharaoh is asserting, "I am going to stop what is going on here!" But more than that, he is raising a defiant fist toward heaven itself:

= "I AM GOING TO STOP GOD!"
We know, of course, that Pharaoh's tactics against the Israelites failed. Scripture tells us:

"The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew."  
--Exodus 1:12

Even his ploy to have the Hebrew midwives kill all the male infants born to Hebrew women was overruled, and we learn that the "people multiplied, and waxed very mighty." (Exodus 1:20)

Pharaoh's third decree--to have all male babies thrown into the river--commands greater attention in the historical record. And no wonder! Its success could jeopardize the next step in God's redemptive program!

STEP FOUR: A LEADER FOR GOD'S PEOPLE  
(Exodus 2-4)

That Scripture is not written like your typical Hollywood script becomes very apparent upon reading the first verse of Exodus 2--which follows, mind you, on the heels of Pharaoh's depraved infanticide decree! Rather
than telling us about the ruthless slaughter of infants, Exodus 2 opens with a romantic interlude (what!?) between a newly-married couple, and the consequent birth of their first child! At first, then, it seems as if this story is out of context—until the remainder of the chapter discloses to us the critical relationship between this newborn boy, Pharaoh's ugly intentions, and God's marvelous and sure sovereignty!

And what an incredible story! Not only in terms of the divine protection of this special infant born to the Levite man and woman, but, also, the "only-God-could-do-it" irony of the child's fate! For we soon learn that this "goodly child"—whose very existence is threatened by Pharaoh's decree—finds salvation in the very midst of enemy territory and is brought right under Pharaoh's nose...into Pharaoh's house...to receive blessing and honor at Pharaoh's own expense! (P.S.—Watch for God to work this way again.) (Exodus 2:2-10)

The child, of course, is Moses...yet to become "Yahweh's incomparable prophet and spokesman." And Scripture wastes little time in hastening to this point in Moses' life. When we left Moses in verse 10, for example, he had just been weaned and brought to Pharaoh's daughter, to reside with her as a member of Pharaoh's family. And not one more word is said about Moses' entire boyhood! Not one! Verse 11 reads: "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens..."

While Scripture by-passes years of details surrounding Moses' upbringing, it makes up for it in telling us of Moses' leadership potential, our next focal point.
There is no question that Moses completely identified with the affliction of his people. He literally stepped down from the throne of Egypt—where the best of wisdom, riches and power were at his fingertips—to help his brethren. But Moses was soon to learn that his way was not God's way of deliverance.

We have already stated that, even among godly men, human desire is often at odds with divine empowering. We saw it in the life of Abraham and, now, we find Moses violating the most basic principle in God's operation: he man-handles the work of God!

The consequences of doing God's work in one's own strength are always tragic...and long-lasting. Thus, we find Moses murdering an Egyptian, losing the respect of his own people, and becoming fugitive to the fear that his sin would find him out. His premature move cost him 40
years of his life, exiled on the backside of a desert tending another's flock. In the interim, no freedom had come to the people of God. (Exodus 2:11-3:1)

DELIVERANCE: THE DIVINE WAY

While Moses was out in the middle of nowhere, God was setting into action a plan to be in the midst of His people—to deliver them.

We are told in Exodus 2:23 that the king of Egypt died—but the cry of the children of Israel reached up to the heavens and was heard by the Living God...the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

"And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God thought about them with favor."

--Exodus 2:25

Ah! God remembers His pledge to the patriarchs—to build a nation and to give their seed the land of Canaan. But the Israelites need deliverance...and, thus, a deliverer! Moses has failed, but, then, there is the faithfulness of God.

We said that one of the precious things about the
way God works is that He always tells us what He is going
to do BEFORE He does it! And, so, we find the Lord appear-
ing to Moses in a burning bush—to announce the Divine way
of deliverance. This time, the strategy is sure:

"And the Lord said, I have surely seen the
affliction of my people which are in Egypt,
and have heard their cry by reason of their
taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and
I AM COME DOWN TO DELIVER THEM out of the
hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them
up out of that land into a good land and a
large, unto a land flowing with milk and
honey..."

---Exodus 3:7,8

Do you know how spectacular this is? God Himself
is going to deliver His people! We said that the unity
of Scripture is what God is doing, and here we see it!

Oh, but let's not forget what else we said. God is
at work, yes—but He seems to work through a man. And even
though Moses blew it by trying to free God's people through human effort, the task is nevertheless given back to him!

"And the Lord said...'Come now and, I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.'"

Are you confused by this? In Exodus 3:8, God says He will deliver His people. In Exodus 3:10, God says Moses will deliver His people! Who, in truth, is going to do it?! Perhaps it would help to see what Scripture says "after the fact"—after Israel is, indeed, delivered from Egypt. Hmmm. This is strange: God gives credit to Moses (Exodus 32:7), but Moses...gives credit to God (Exodus 32:11)! Look at the record!:

> Exodus 32:7
> "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves."

> Exodus 32:11
> "And Moses said, 'Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt?'
GOD'S WAY OF LEADERSHIP

Without a thorough understanding of God's concept of leadership, the above situation could appear confusing, as well as contradictory. An explanation of "theocratic rule", therefore, is our next order of business.

Moses, in receiving this particular commission from God, becomes, in fact, the first theocratic leader in God's program. As such, he is different from any other leader in the world, although, perhaps, not in the sense we expect. For example, the very term "theocracy" in our day has come to mean "God-ruled"—implying the direct governmental rule of God in the affairs of men. Such a "theocracy", however, has never come into being!

Even the Nation Israel, the only true theocratic nation ever to exist on the face of the earth, was not directly ruled by God. Rather, God ruled through kings, who, in turn, were responsible to God for the divine sanctions of their office!

ISRAEL; THE THEOCRATIC NATION:
Do you see the distinctive of theocratic leadership now? In a democracy, the leader is responsible to whom? His constituency, right? But not so with a theocratic leader; he is responsible to God. Thus, we will find Moses continually checking back, not with his people, but with Jehovah—to search out and do the will of God. David, the greatest king in all of Israel's history, hardly dared to do anything without first inquiring of the Lord!

We are not here introducing a new idea. From the beginning, we have set forth the concept that God works through a man to accomplish His purposes. We have merely given a name to that unique operation by designating it as "theocratic leadership."

God, therefore, is going to deliver His people from Egypt—but He is going to do it through Moses. And if any situation demanded a leader empowered by God, this one surely did. So far, we have heard a very positive "progress report" on the increasing number of Israelites in the land. But G. Campbell Morgan reminds us that "these people were not a nation yet, they were a mass." Indeed, he goes so far as to call them a "mob"—and a mob indicates the need for organization and leadership.

The call of Moses, therefore, sets into operation a movement of God that cannot be fathomed. Israel is ready to be uprooted from Egypt, and it is Moses—Yahweh's incomparable prophet and spokesman—who will ask the oppressor to let God's people go!
STEP FIVE: DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT
(Exodus 5-15)

There is no event in all the world that shares the exceeding glory associated with Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

If that sounds like an exaggerated statement, bear in mind that God had determined that the deliverance of His people would be an act that would lead all men to honor and respect Him!²¹

PURPOSE OF THE EXODUS:

"That thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth."
--Exodus 9:14

Moreover, the Exodus is heralded as the greatest concentration and demonstration of God's mighty acts in all of Scripture. Let us say that again for proper emphasis:
Indeed, there is no question that the Exodus event had a profound impact on the people of Israel as well as on the surrounding nations. While we do not have time to study the 10 signs and wonders that caused the whole earth to tremble before God, it should be pointed out that Israel, from her day of deliverance, was unable to interpret her life apart from this great event.

"Because of what God did here, a special relationship was created between God and Israel. A disparate group of families and clans were now made into a people who thought of themselves as 'the people of God'." 22

Not only did Israel now view herself as the Chosen of God, but Jehovah was to be known henceforth not only as "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"—but as "the God who brought them up out of Egypt."

The deliverance from Egypt, however, was more than just God's phenomenal rescue of His people; it was the
birth announcement of that great nation that God had promised
to the patriarchs four centuries earlier!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENESIS 15:13</th>
<th>GENESIS 46:3,4</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;And (God) said unto ABRAM, 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's...and shall be afflicted 400 years (but) afterwards shall they come out with great substance.'&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;And God spake unto JACOB in the visions of the night, and said, 'Fear not to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation...and I will also surely bring thee up again.'&quot;</td>
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</table>

Why did God deliver Israel from Egypt after 430 years? Was it because He could not stand to see His people in bondage any longer, and so He decided to take action? No; God had purposely brought them down to Egypt. Inherent in their experience there was something essential to making these people a great nation.

Let us suggest, then, that the exodus from Egypt was occasioned by the pure and simple fact that Israel's God--Jehovah -- could not fulfill His promise to make a great nation as long as Israel remained rooted in Egyptian soil! Deliverance was necessary, foremost, because:

**TWO NATIONS CANNOT EXIST IN ONE COUNTRY! THEY EACH MUST HAVE THEIR OWN LAND!**

Israel could not become a bona fide nation while planted in Egypt! Politically speaking, it is impossible to have two nations in one land. God knew that! And do
you know where Israel is going hence? to a LAND which God had promised unto their fathers: to a good and pleasant LAND, a LAND flowing with milk and honey!

STEP SIX: THE CULTURE OF A NATION
(Exodus 20-Deuteronomy)

We must admit a deliberate digression here in studying the above section of Scripture. Exodus 20 marks the giving of the Law, a body of doctrine, to the people of Israel. As such, it is God speaking, not acting. And, yet, while we grant that this legislation is not historical narrative, it is necessary to our understanding of God's program. In fact, you cannot have a nation without this! Eugene H. Merrill explains:

"Israel's next stop, and their most important, was in the Plain of Sinai before the mountain where Moses had first seen the manifestation of God in the burning bush. Here were to take place some of the most important events in Israel's history, for this place was, in many respects, the cradle of Theocracy...Israel was at the threshold of a new and vital experience, the giving of the covenant law that would lend their loose federation cohesion, enabling them to know the will of God in government, society, and worship."23
Do you see how important this section is in relationship to the nation? For one complete year, God spoke to His people, telling them how to worship, how to dress, what to eat, how to sow a field, etc. Do you think America's laws cover such strange and varied topics?

In truth, this section involves more than the giving of "The Law"; it is instruction in a way of life. In order for a nation to function together, it must have common ways of doing things. (When in Rome, do as the Romans do!) And, so, God herein gives His people a CULTURE: "the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns characteristic of a people." 24

Mt. Sinai is important, then, not only for the imparting of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), but also for the fact that Israel now had patterns for living that would distinguish them as a separate and peculiar people--the people of God. Indeed, it was at this place that God spoke to every aspect necessary for the nation's maturing, whether in the area of psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science or religion. This was an all-encompassing covenant between God and His people!

It was also here, at Mt. Sinai, that God vowed to be Israel's King, to which Israel gave the emphatic pledge, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Exodus 19:8)

And it was this vital alliance that was Israel's only guarantee of victory in the new land.
The Exodus was more than the deliverance of a people from bondage; it was the exaltation of Almighty God. Through this one event, Jehovah caused the whole land to tremble at His power, His might, His glory. And, yet, we must remind ourselves that God's purposes were not consummated through this act, even though it is considered to be the most impressive concentration of His activity in all of Scripture!

But look! Salvation, blessing, the formation of Israel as the mediator-nation between God and all the nations of the earth\(^{26}\)--this is to take place in....Canaan....the next stop in God's redemptive program. As one author points out:

"All (the) covenant promises are conditioned on Israel being in her land, and they become effective only when she is there." 27

Oh, friends, mark it well. Canaan--that land flowing with milk and honey--is to serve as the cradle of salvation in God's redemptive purposes. God is going to plant His people there, just as He promised the patriarchs
that He would.

Numbers 13, in fact, serves as an update on that promise, for here we find the children of Israel a mere eleven days' journey from that land which God swore to their fathers! And it is here that God commissions Moses to send an investigative team into the land, to see if it is not all that God had promised it would be—a good land, and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Maybe you are wondering at this point why it was necessary to spy out a land that God had already approved and designated for Israel. That is, if God already planned to give the land to the Israelites for a possession, why did they need to check it out, and evaluate their ability to take it from the inhabitants therein?

Primarily, the answer lies in the way in which God works. Yes, He makes promises, but He also expects us to appropriate them for ourselves—to take possession of what He has promised. In so doing, He tests our faith in His faithfulness! In this respect, then, Numbers 13 is a tragic commentary on the people of God. Their failure here is a fiasco without parallel in God's entire program of redemption!

You know the story well. After 40 days of scouting out the land, the spies return with their report. Indeed, they take no exception to the fruitfulness of the land, for it is exceedingly lush with grapes and figs and pomegranates, just as God had said. But...there are walled cities, trained
armies, enemy camps in ominous number. And so the spies give their verdict—one that is too often sounded by the saints of the Most High God:

**WE ARE UNABLE**

Perhaps our initial reaction to this "evil report" is one of sympathy and easy association. How many times have we found ourselves saying the same thing? And, after all, let's remember that Israel is what? a nomadic people! They are not militarily equipped. They have no battering rams with them. Do we really have the right to be so hard on them? Does God?

F.B. Meyer gives us only a glimpse of the calamity recorded here when he observes that:

"Unbelief never gets beyond the difficulties—the cities, the walls, the giants."28

Meyer suggests, in fact, that unbelief always discredits God.29 But the worse consequence is this: unbelief impedes the work of God! Scripture is clear on the incredible impact of unbelief. Barren women did not stop the work of God! The madness in Pharaoh's heart did not stop the work of God! Satan himself cannot stop the work
But do you know what Scripture says about Israel's unbelief here? Their unbelief... "limited the Holy One of Israel"! (Psalm 78:41)

You see, the spies were not verbalizing their own inadequacies when they said, "We are unable." We could at least credit them with humility if this had been the case. Instead, their verdict was the most appalling accusation ever to fall from human lips, for behind their statement of "We are unable" was the staggering charge:

**GOD IS NOT ABLE**

Had God not promised to give them the land, to drive out the inhabitants, to bring Israel into the limelight of His love? Two of the scouts, at least, were convinced of this: Joshua and Caleb! Remember their verdict? "Come on, guys! We saw the same walled cities, the same imposing stature of the enemy, but, look, we are able..." Right? No. This is the report Joshua and Caleb gave to Israel:

"The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us."
Yes, as Meyer said, unbelief always discredits God, but, thankfully, faith has its own consistency: it looks to God alone—every time. And, oh, that we could read here that Israel believed God, that the people got behind Joshua and Caleb, but no. Unbelief, if not checked, will fester inside the soul of man until it surfaces as sin’s most rank sore—rebellion.

Rebellion, simply defined, is going in the opposite direction from God—and, so, we find Israel, of all things, electing a captain to take them back...to Egypt! (Numbers 14:4) The human mind is incapable of pondering the extent to which such an action would humiliate the God of heaven—but even more, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

Indeed, God’s wrath is so kindled by this act of mutiny that He threatens to eliminate the entire nation as if it were one mere man—and begin anew with Moses! And perhaps because Moses doesn’t bat an eyelash at this offer, we fail to realize the authenticity of it. That is, God was willing to forfeit all the progress He had made over the past centuries and accomplish His purposes, from scratch, through the seed of...Moses!

We know, of course, the results of Moses’ intercession for Israel and his urgent concern for God’s reputation. The nation was spared sudden death and God was not mocked among the nations of the earth. But here is the stark tragedy of this episode: GOD’S PROGRAM WAS BROUGHT TO A COMPLETE HALT FOR 40 YEARS! The lament is clearly heard in God’s word to Moses:
"And the Lord said (to Moses), 'I have pardoned according to thy word; But... as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.'

--Numbers 14:21

Perhaps we need to hear these same words in our own venacular to catch the import of them:

"Moses, I can't do it with this generation of people, but, believe Me, I will do it!"

Friends, Israel's unbelief and rebellion had sore consequences! God does not slap their wrists and let them carry on. No, an entire generation is put on the shelf! God simply cannot work through an unbelieving and obstinate people--and so He will have to wait for the next generation! This is incredible: God's own people blocking the progress of God's redemptive work on earth! God has never been forced to set aside an entire population before!

Unbelief and rebellion cannot be taken lightly in view of the above. Indeed, if it hasn't sunk in that God is hindered only by these, perhaps we need to be reminded of the sober facts. God can overcome any obstacle except unbelief and rebellion in those who are ordained to be His ministers!
Folks, Israel was an eleven-day journey away from God's blessing, but this particular generation never set foot on Canaanite soil. And it wasn't because of the walls, nor the giants; it was because of their unbelief and rebellion, both of which are...heart attitudes. God, you will remember, has limited His operation on earth to working through human agencies. He must have a man whose heart is perfect towards Him! Fortunately, the next generation, under the leadership of Joshua, takes the way of faith and finds victory in the land!

**A NEW GENERATION**

In order to show the severe consequences of unbelief and rebellion, we have perhaps overstated the situation above when we said that God's work is stopped. In reality, nothing can stop God, as He Himself testifies in Isaiah 43:13:
But, we need to observe a very basic principle from all this—and one that is applicable to us today. Yes, God was forced to set aside an entire generation of people—because of their repeated unbelief and rebellion—but He was not forced to shelve His plan to build a great nation nor to bring Israel into the land!

True, God seems to have freely limited His operation on earth to working through a man, but that does not limit His operation! In other words, God is not obligated to wait around forever for an individual or even a group of people to "get with it"; His program must go on! And if one individual deliberately and willfully blows it, God will look for someone else.

In this last respect, the generation that perished in the wilderness lost more than Canaan; they lost the joy and privilege of being involved in the pre-eminent and eternal purposes of God! Knowing this, and knowing the Great Commission which God has given to the Church (chosen individuals), we ought to be about the task with more diligence and fear—and awe.

To be sure, a believing and obedient people stand aligned with a God of action—as we shall see next in the Book of Joshua.
The Book of Joshua opens with a new generation about to enter the land; it is an exciting, yet sacred, moment. Moses, that great man of God, has died, and Joshua—a military man—has been elected to take the people into Canaan. You might be thinking, "Ah, what a fitting leader!" But, friend, it isn't going to be Joshua's military expertise that will bring victory in the land; God is going to do it:

"Now after the death of Moses...the Lord spoke unto Joshua, saying, 'Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them. (And) as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.'"

--Joshua 1:2,5

Do you see the guarantee of success in the above statement? Let us spell it out plainly:

"As I worked through Moses, so will I work for you, Joshua."

Oh, how we need to embrace this truth, especially in the Book of Joshua! God is going to work; the battle is the Lord's! (1 Samuel 17:47)
HOW JOSHUA RELATES TO GOD'S GOAL

Before we single out the book of Joshua for closer study, it might be profitable to remind ourselves once again, as Saphir notes, that "the Bible is not an aggregate of literary productions; it is...a book of history which is not yet completed."30

Said another way, the Bible's various parts—no matter how noble and developed in theme—were never intended as separate, complete entities. Rather, each book contributes to the unfolding of God's great eternal plan, and each facilitates to some degree, the realization of His goal for Earth.

Because of this, we dare not perceive the book of Joshua solely as a diary of "daring do" recorded by a military head, nor as a great war epic intended to bolster our faith by its flashes of victory.

The more important message of Joshua is its focus on the land, a vital element of the Abrahamic Covenant and, also, the essential stage for God's purposes henceforth. Author Edward Moseley observes:

"The spotlight of history and Revelation is thrown on this little country (Canaan) as is done for no other land, and we may expect some performance upon this land as the stage, intended for all the world to see."31
If, as we have suggested, the key importance of the book of Joshua is its **focus on the land**, we should not be surprised to find that the book divides into two main sections dealing with this very topic! Indeed, it seems that God desires to tell us two significant details regarding the land in these two divisions, as is illustrated below:

![Diagram](image)

A. The land is _____.  
B. The land is _____.

Perhaps the above diagrams will seem meaningless until we fill in the blanks regarding their specific content, but it is hoped that these very diagrams will help the reader search out for himself the true, vital focus of this fantastically progressive journal!

Surely, the dynamic import of Joshua is not solely its military phenomena nor its "how to" formula of success; rather, something happens in this book that heralds the acti-
vity of God with silver trumpets, that evidences an accelerated pace in the purposes of God, and that confirms God's promises to the seed of Abraham with shouts of victory on almost every page! We turn now to a more detailed study of Joshua.

JOSHUA 1-12: CONQUERING THE LAND

We have said that God apparently desires to tell us two specific things regarding the land in the book of Joshua. The first point is found in Joshua 1 through 12, but we need not go into elaborate detail here--especially since Joshua 10:40 serves as an excellent digest of this entire section! Listen to the message and, particularly, note the momentum (progress) inherent in these brief lines.

"So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed."

Oh, friends--this is the land that had the walled cities, the professional armies, the giants--remember? Do you realize that in this rapid-fire report, no less than 31 kings were deposed! (Joshua 12). This is a phenomenal undertaking!
What is God trying to communicate in Joshua 10:40? What is happening here? First of all, since this is a summary passage, we can see that the historian is looking back over all that has taken place—and his report is clear: God's people did enter the land; they also subdued the enemy and established authority over their captives. Said another way, they planted 31 victory flags in Canaanite soil and smashed the military backbone of these several areas.

In short, then, the message of Joshua 1 through 12 is that Israel conquered the land. Scripture, in fact, declares that Joshua took these kings and their land "at one time"! Why? "Because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel." (Joshua 10:42).

Well, with such overwhelming victory, what do you suppose the Israelites did afterwards? Surely if they had conquered the United States, we would imagine that, within hours, Israelites would be settling in California, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas and so on—right? But, look! After crushing the military machine in the various parts of Canaan, where do we find the people of God?

"And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal." (Joshua 10:43)
GILGAL -- The first encampment of the Israelites after crossing the Jordan, and their headquarters during the conquest of Canaan. (Josh. iv. 19-24). Fntnt. 32

Why have we underscored the word "headquarters" above? Mainly because of this: if we don't identify how Gilgal functions at this point in history, we may encounter great difficulty--and confusion--in the book of Judges! You see, Gilgal served as a military beachhead for Israel. It was from this base that she penetrated into Canaan. Nevertheless--and this is important--after each battle, Israel returned here, to her military headquarters at Gilgal.

So, although we may rightly conclude from Joshua 10:40 that Israel did indeed "mop up" the land, we must keep in mind that SHE DID NOT POSSESS THE LAND. Occupation would come later.
We are not suggesting, however, that the breaking of Canaan's military power should be played down just because Israel did not occupy the land immediately. Her failure to possess the land straightaway will be discussed later. In terms of Joshua 1 through 12, however, we must remind ourselves that we are here considering a very major accomplishment—an accomplishment attended by the power and presence of Almighty God.

Let us review our diagram once more, noting what major fact God would have us know about the land in Joshua 1 through 12.

![Diagram]

JOSHUA

1-12  13-24

A. The land is conquered.  B. The land is ______.

Before we go on to consider the second thing God apparently wants us to know about the land (as recorded in Joshua 13-24), we need to look at two significant
battles in this first section. One is very familiar to us—the battle of Jericho. The other, which took place at Ai, is perhaps less known, yet equally vital to our understanding of man's place and responsibility in God's work. Moreover, we cannot ignore that God underscores these two particular battles while glossing over significant others in the Bible record.

[JERICHO: A STRANGE STRATEGY]

Surely, the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks upon the battle of Jericho is the tumbling down of its magnificent, impenetrable walls. But that is not the only incredible aspect of this military expedition. Keep in mind that our study involves tracing how God works.

You see, if we were to take a reporter's approach to this peculiar battle, we would observe many things: the bearing of the Ark, the priests carrying trumpets, the seven days' march around the city in absolute silence, the calculated fall of the formidable stronghold. But here's the bottom line of the story: somewhere we would have to note, "And God never worked this way again."

That is, if we followed Israel's armies to Ai or Jerusalem or Jarmuth, we would not witness what we saw at Jericho. Rather, Israel would appear to us like any other army—equipped with weapons, suffering casualties, doggedly pursuing the foe.
Do you see now why this first battle is so significant? God displayed a highly unique method of operation here. That is, He executed a military feat at Jericho that He would not again repeat, even though Israel would engage in many ensuing battles.

What did God do at Jericho that was so unique as far as His method of operation goes? To answer that, we need to ask what the people did. The answer is incredible: they did nothing. It was God who conquered Jericho—single-handedly, alone. After Jericho, you see, Israel took the rest of the land...through combat!

So then, why did God work this way at the first? We cannot know all the implications, but perhaps it was to show us that He really doesn't need us after all in the accomplishment of His desire and yet, conversely, He chooses us for this high calling nonetheless. We should rejoice every time we reflect upon this truth.

Before we go on to Ai, perhaps it behooves us to consider a very pertinent observation in Ellicott's Bible Commentary regarding Israel's military maneuvers in Canaan:
"The wars of Israel in Canaan are always presented by the Old Testament as 'the wars of the Lord.' It would be well to remember this aspect of the story. The conquest of Canaan is too often treated as an enterprise of the Israelites (although)... The Old Testament presents the matter in an entirely different light. The war is a divine enterprise, in which human instruments are employed, but so as to be entirely subordinate to the divine will."33

The above quotation does not contradict what we have suggested in regards to what God did at Jericho. When we said earlier that "God never worked this way again", it was not to imply that God bowed out of Israel's battles after that point, but only that His personal involvement was not manifested in such a solo and obvious manner as what was witnessed at Jericho. As we have said before, God's limiting Himself to human instrumentalities to accomplish His work does not negate the fact that God is doing it!

**AI: TAKING ACTION WITHOUT GOD**

When God's people face impenetrable walls like those at Jericho, when the task before them seems titanic, God is able to calm their fears with the question, "Is anything too hard for Me?" (Genesis 18:14). And it seems that God's people more readily look to God for triumph in situations that are definitely beyond their own strength.
At Ai, however, God could have asked His people another question, and one which we ourselves need to keep in mind. God could have asked, "Is anything too small for Me?", for Israel had decided, after "sizing up" Ai, that it was within their power to take it—without God's help. Their presumption, of course, spelled disaster:

"And (the spies) returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai... for they are but few."

"So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled from before the men of Ai." (Joshua 7:3,4)

Part of the reason for Israel's humiliating defeat at Ai, then, was their overconfidence ("Ai is small; we can handle it alone"), but there was also another contributing element.

When the news of Israel's cowardice (they turned their backs on the enemy) reaches Joshua, he is utterly perplexed and doesn't know what to say (Joshua 7:8). The defeat suffered by the Israelites would surely encourage future attacks by the enemy who might view Jehovah a little less powerful than originally thought!

Joshua, unable to bear the idea of God's Name being dishonored, falls prostrate before the Lord—for an entire evening! Most of us today would commend such an action, but God is not at all moved by the scene. Rather than allow Joshua and the elders to continue in prayer, He interrupts their agonizing before Him with two harsh words: "Get up!"
In short, God is saying, "Get up and do something! All the agonizing in the world isn't going to change the situation. There is sin in the camp and it must be dealt with speedily!" If such words seem harsh or out of character for a God who loves the repentant, prayerful heart, perhaps we need to be reminded that God is not interested in inward agony when outward action is the more appropriate solution to a situation! Such was the case in relationship to Israel's defeat at Ai.

She was not only rendered powerless before the enemy because of her overconfidence; she was put to flight because one man had defied God's instruction regarding the booty at Ai:

"So the Lord said to Joshua, 'Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things. Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you any more unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst.'" (Joshua 7:10-12) (NASB)

Do you see what had happened above? Achan, a member of the tribe of Judah, had gone against the Lord's instruction, and had buried for himself some of the spoil from battle (see Joshua 7:1, 18-26). What is that called when a child of God opposes Him, and acts contrary to His command?

REBELLION:
GOING AGAINST GOD
Do you remember what we said about rebellion? It impedes the work of God. The Lord cannot continue to prosper His work when rebellion stands in the way. If you question whether rebellion really limits the Holy One of Israel to such a degree, look at what God said would be His recourse if this outward action on Achan's part was not dealt with:

"I WON'T BE WITH YOU ANYMORE!"

Do you realize how devastating this is! We've noted that Moses' and Joshua's success was dependent upon God being with them, going with them, working through them, remember? ("As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." Joshua 1:5) God is here telling Israel, "I won't go along with you in this! I can't work until this matter is dealt with. And if it is not dealt with, then don't expect My presence with you—ever!" Friends, that's the essence of what God is saying in Joshua 7:12.

Rebellion is no insignificant sin; it can cost one the presence of God! It can also cost the very life of the person who persistly or ruthlessly engages in it. Remember the obstinate generation: God brought out of Egypt? Their carcasses fell in the wilderness; their death was attributable to their relentless rebellion. And what about the offender who brought God's wrath upon Israel at Ai? Scripture offers no sweet eulogy.
"And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor...And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." (Joshua 7:24,25)

You can see from the preceding pages, then, why God is so careful to underscore these two battles. They teach us much, not only about the Lord and how He works, but also how man's relationship to God can either prosper or impede the divine enterprise.

JOSHUA 13-24: DIVIDING THE LAND

There is no question that God is working with the land in Step 7 of building a nation. We have already seen how He devotes 12 chapters of material to the events surrounding the conquest of that land. Now, in Joshua 13-24, we are about to discover the second facet the Lord would have us understand about Canaan.

We saw in Joshua 1 through 12 that Israel did not actually possess the land. Rather, they launched a very successful military expedition from their beachhead at Gilgal. When we come to chapter 13 of the book of Joshua, Israel is still encamped at Gilgal, and the Lord speaks to Joshua regarding the bounds of the land which has not yet been conquered:
"Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the Lord said to him, 'There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed...Now therefore divide this land...unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh, with whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward."

This assignment of the land to the various tribes is an important military maneuver. It is equivalent to telling each unit, "Here's your territory; now go occupy it!" Israel, you will remember, had broken the military strength of the various nations under Joshua's leadership, so her task now was merely to make herself "at home."

Printed below is a map depicting the various assignments made by Joshua. Keep in mind that the dividing of the land at this point is on paper only. Throughout the remainder of the book of Joshua, which deals with each tribe's inheritance, Israel is still stationed at Gilgal. It isn't until the book of Judges that the armies actually move out to take the land.

![Map of Israel's land assignments](image.png)
In review, then, let us remember that the primary focus of the Book of Joshua is on the land—and for good reason: you cannot have a nation without land! Joshua covers two phases of the land promised to the seed of Abraham. In chapters 1 through 12, we see Israel conquer the land; in chapters 13 through 14, we see her being assigned individual allotments. All this action takes place from Gilgal.

**JOSHUA**

1-12 13-14

A. The land is conquered. B. The land is assigned.

Perhaps before we move on to the book of Judges, we should note the time-span of the book of Joshua. It begins, you will recall, with the Lord's appointment of Joshua to fill the leadership role vacated by Moses' death. Depending upon Joshua's actual age then, and the fact that the book closes with Joshua at a ripe, old age, we can conjecture that the time-span of the book is anywhere from 40 to 70 years (or no more than the average life-span of an individual).
You might be asking yourself, "So what?" at this point, but keep in mind that we are tracing "progress" in the Scriptural record, and time sequence can have a bearing on our understanding of this concept. (It would have made a significant difference in our understanding of the way God works, for example, if Abraham's "son of promise" had arrived within a year as opposed to a quarter of a century!)

Moreover, we are about to study a book that differs radically from Joshua time-wise, although it covers, basically, the same topic: conquest of the land. We will speak on this point in our next step.

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**STEP EIGHT: TRIBES ESTABLISHED IN THE LAND**

(Judges, Ruth)

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When one enters into the historical record of the Book of Judges, one soon learns that it is a record with some glaring peculiarities.

It is a crucial book, however, because, like Joshua, it tells us something about the land. And since we are watching God build a nation--and you don't have legitimate nationhood until you have a land--this book is indispensable to understanding the program of God!
So what are the specific peculiarities of the book? Since there are many, it may help, perhaps, to elaborate upon each one separately. But, first, some introductory remarks.

One of the outstanding features of the Book of Judges is the fact that it covers a time-span of nearly 350 years! That is incredible in view of its subject matter: possession of the land.

Covers between 40 to 60 years, during which Israel, under Joshua, broke the military might of Canaan in preparation for taking possession of the land.

Covers approximately 300 to 350 years, during which Israel settled, by tribal lot, the land of Canaan.

From the above information, we know that Israel did, ultimately, settle the land according to tribal distribution. However, in view of how long it took them to do so, and in view of how the people functioned during this 350 years, it is questionable as to whether we can say Israel stood as a bona fide nation during this time.

Indeed, the way the people of Israel functioned during the days of the judges seems to be a major concern of the author, who frequently points to a staggering need at this time with the comment that "every man did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6).
This need, then, which we will soon identify, arose, in part, as a consequence of the way in which Israel took possession of the land. Let's read the opening lines of Judges, therefore, and see if we can spot any curious elements in the record:

"Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?"

"And the Lord said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand."

"And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him."

Ah, ha! Do you see anything new here? Or strange? We hinted quite strongly in the preceding step, you will recall, that the Book of Judges would not make sense if one did not understand that Israel had not actually occupied the land during Joshua's campaigns, but that her "success" was in crippling the military strength of the country.

Moreover, if one did not know that Israel returned to a central camp (Gilgal) after each battle and that the dividing of the land was on "the drawing board" only, these new assaults in the opening lines of Judges would seem repetitive. Indeed, one might be thinking to him-
self, "But I thought they had already conquered the land!"

The first "oddity" we need to recognize about the Book of Judges, then, is that it is NOT a repeat of Joshua's campaigns. Rather, the tribes are here claiming what had been designated as "theirs for the taking" when Joshua cast lots before the Lord to determine each tribe's inheritance.

But watch carefully now! When we say "each tribe" above, we are touching upon a new thing in God's program! Remember Joshua? All Israel went to battle with him, right? Throughout the book, you read of a united assault against the enemy. Not so in the Book of Judges. Judah and Simeon fight the Canaanites and the Perizzites; Ephraim goes against Bethel; Dan assaults the Amorites and is rendered powerless! Is this not a peculiar thing? Dear friends, this is the first time this happens in God's program! Do you know what it is, and the implications it has? Look!

THE 12 TRIBES ARE FUNCTIONING INDEPENDENTLY!

For 350 years, the tribes of Israel will act separately and individually! The great Bible commentator Matthew Henry tells us the ramifications of this activity during the "days of the judges":
"It should seem that in these times each tribe had very much its government in ordinary within itself, and acted separately, without one common head, or counsel, which occasioned many differences among themselves, and kept them from being or doing anything considerable." 34

Do you see how this disunity among the tribes and disagreement among the people of God threatens to retard a vital aspect of His end goal?

GOD'S GOAL INVOLVES A UNIFIED PEOPLE WHOSE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER AND FOR GOD WILL BRING GLORY TO HIS NAME.

This goal cannot be attained with God's people acting independently of one another, that's for sure. But let's look again at Henry's observations regarding the opening lines of the Book of Judges, for he alludes to another "oddity" in this situation: the fact that Israel has no central leadership during this time. Our premise has been that God operates theocratically through a man, through an individual. We also saw how Moses became the first theocratic leader in God's operation. When Moses died, God promised the same empowering to Joshua. But look at Judges 1:11 There is no reference
to God having anointed a successor for Joshua! Therefore:

Remember what one author called the numerous Israelites gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai before God drew them together under Moses' leadership? "A mob." Do you realize that Israel potentially is in danger of chaos worse than that now that Joshua is dead and there is no one to fill his shoes?!

But wait a minute! Are we not studying the "days of the judges"? How do they fit into this picture; what is their particular function? The first thing we need to understand about these judges is the fact that, like Joshua and Moses before him, they ARE theocratic leaders! We know this from Judges 2:16:

"...the Lord raised up judges."
Not only did God raise up the judges, but we learn in verse 18 of chapter 2 that:

"The Lord was with the judge."

Does that statement have a familiar ring to it? It should! The thing that made Moses and Joshua successful was the fact that God was with them; that God had promised to prosper them and attend their efforts with His own personal Presence! (Joshua 1:5).

In light of the above factors, you might be wondering how we could conclude that God did not fill the leadership void left by Joshua's death. We conclude that for several reasons.

First of all, the leadership characterized by any particular judge differed significantly from the position and authority held by Moses and Joshua. For one, Moses and Joshua gave direction to--and governed--all of Israel. They were national figures. A judge, in contrast, was more akin to a "hometown hero", and had only limited geographical influence. Matthew Henry makes the following notation regarding these local leaders:

"The government of the judges was not constant, but occasional...(They) were raised up and animated by the Spirit of God to do particular service to the public when there was occasion..."
The essence of "judging" Israel, according to Henry, was confined to two principal activities: avenging Israel of her enemies and purging Israel of her idolatries. As such, judges were not so much political (or spiritual) leaders as they were military figures, if but for a moment. The differences in the theocratic leadership exhibited by Moses and Joshua in comparison with the judges are summarized below.

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<th>MOSES &amp; JOSHUA</th>
<th>JUDGES</th>
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<td>* National figures</td>
<td>* Home-town heroes</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Life-long leadership</td>
<td>* Occasional, abbreviated rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Authority, influence was evidenced in all realms: political, spiritual and military</td>
<td>* Authority, influence limited to military realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Authority recognized in both times of peace and times of crisis (war)</td>
<td>* Authority quite limited in times of peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Central leaders</td>
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We noted already that the author of Judges alludes to a tremendous need in the land during this period of Israel's history, but before we look to that particular issue, we should also note that a stigma looms throughout the record here—the fact that Israel did not drive out the Canaanite, despite Joshua's groundwork in that direction.

"The first aspect of sin presented in Judges is that of inadequate land occupation."37

Occupancy of the land should not have posed any particular problems for Israel, according to Leon Wood, author of a book entitled, Distressing Days of the Judges, from which we've gleaned the above quote. Wood supports his charge as follows:

"Israel's relation to this conquered land, when the military acts of Joshua had been completed, was simply that it lay before them needing to be occupied."

"With the strength of the land having been broken by Joshua's campaigns, and with the fear complex among the Canaanites being very strong, the effort of occupation should have not been difficult. And it may be assumed that this was the thinking of Joshua as he returned to Gilgal at the close of his efforts of conquest. He had done his work; the people now should be able to do theirs without great delay or difficulty."38
That Israel took some 350 years to accomplish this task, then, is more shameful than sad. And, perhaps, to a major degree, the lack of tribal alliance (unity) may have been responsible for this fiasco. On the other hand, there is another factor, given by the author of Judges himself, which is just as important in understanding why Israel did not successfully drive out her enemies:

"And all that generation (under Joshua) were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel."

--Judges 2:10

We see from this, once again, the retarding effects unbelief can have on the work of God. May our own generation not be so prone to forget the Lord who doeth wonders in the Earth!

A CRITICAL VACUUM

Anyone who is at all familiar with the "sin cycles" in the Book of Judges realizes there is a desperate need among God's people. Indeed, the historian in Judges attributes Israel's spiritual rut (apostasy ➔ servitude ➔ repentance ➔ deliverance) to the fact that "every man did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6)
As we have already noted, the leadership offered by the various judges did not remedy this crisis, since they were, as G. Campbell Morgan observes, "flung up by the occasion". That is, they were men appearing at a crisis in the history of the people, and for the time being they were leaders, and after that they passed back into the crowd. 39

The judges were temporary and special deliverers whose power only extended over portions of the country 40; the people of Israel wanted someone permanent to rule over them! The leadership vacuum left by Moses and Joshua was surely intensified during these dark days!

---Who is here? No one!

THE VACUUM

The tribes are settled in the land according to their inheritance, but there is no central leader for 350 years!

Is is little wonder, then, that various heroes during the days of the judges were pressed by the people to assume the national reins of government--as we evidence in the following account from Judges 8:22--
"Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian."

Without question, Gideon was a spectacular hero in Israel, and one could hardly blame the people for wanting such a man to rule over them. He had, after all, rallied four tribes in his campaign against the Midianites! Such a confederation was rare in light of the separatism that characterized the ranks of Israel at this time.

Gideon refused, however, to fane the fires of his own popularity, and went so far as to rebuke Israel with the following concession speech:

"And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you."

--Judges 8:23

Apparently Israel did not harken to the words of Gideon, because the record makes it clear that, as for Israel, every man continued to do what was right in his own eyes!
We said at the beginning of this step that the Book of Judges was a critical book in that it told us something about Israel in the land. (Nationhood demands acquisition of a property!) In actuality, the historical data found in Judges covers three specific aspects regarding occupation of the land. These topics, which form the main divisions of the book, are given below:

<table>
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<th>Introduction;</th>
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<th>A flashback, depicting the moral conditions prior to the judges' rule</th>
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We can see from the above that the author was eager to tell us, first of all, that 1.) Israel did enter the land to occupy it, although her slackness and sin hindered swift acquisition; 2.) secondly, that God, nevertheless, was with Israel and provided local "saviors" to deliver Israel from the bondage brought on by her sin; 3.) thirdly, a flashback, depicting the moral and cultural conditions that prevailed during the "occupation", and that necessitated the raising up of judges to get Israel out of her repeated crises.
It is this third aspect—the ungodliness which precipitated the need for judges in Israel at this time—that will be our point of concern here. Keep in mind that this particular section, Judges 17 through 21, is a flash-back. The events recorded here—which are disconnected from each other and from the section preceding them—took place shortly after Joshua’s death, and during that period in which the tribes engaged in separate efforts to claim their respective territory.

**STORY # 1: MICAH’S IDOLATRY**

The first thing we need to keep in mind as we read these incidents is the historian’s obvious purpose for writing them! The author is trying to show us the moral and religious decadence that results when men act according to their own standards of morality, conscience and justice.

The story of Micah begins in chapter 17 and, to be sure, the opening lines sound innocent enough. Why? Because we find that Micah, who has stolen a great deal of silver from his own mother, confesses his act and freely restores the money to her. That sounds like a commendable act, does it not?

But, in reading further, we find that the mother’s intent for the silver was to make a graven image! And Micah did not appear dismayed by this since he himself "had a house of gods," according to Judges 17:5! Dear friends, this man was an Israelite! He not only made idols for his household, but he also consecrated one of his own sons to become his personal priest! This kind of thing, mind you, went on for 350 years!
Had God not spoken to Israel regarding worship of Him and the priesthood at Mt. Sinai? Would you say His instructions are being violated here? Dear friends, this is called gross ________. This is the way men were dealing with God in the days of the judges!

**STORY # 2: DAN FOLLOWS MICAH'S COURSE**

In Judges 18, Micah's sin enlarges and spreads when others in Israel become impressed with his "household priest." Since we last dropped in on Micah, he has hired a Levite, who was just passing through, to be his personal spiritual counsellor! (Judges 17:7-13).

Perhaps Micah had suffered a guilty conscience over electing a mere son to this sacred position, but now that he has a Levite—a legitimate heir to the position of spiritual leadership—Micah seems somewhat satisfied with himself.

"Then said Micah (after hiring the Levite as his own personal priest), Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to be my priest." --Judges 17:13

What Micah seems to be overlooking here is the fact that God has consecrated the Levites for spiritual
service, yes, but NOT in a man's own living room, nor for granting "divine favor" to any one individual!

We said that Micah's sin was translated to others. Unfortunately, it was not just an individual here and there who desired the same kind of self-appointed spiritual guide; it was a whole tribe! And that's the sad story the historian relates in Judges 18!

It seems that a company of Danites, one of the last tribes to lay hold of its inheritance, had occasion to lodge overnight at Micah's house—enroute to spying out their appointed territory. While they were in Micah's home, then, they heard—and recognized—the voice of the Levite, and inquired as to what he was doing there. They knew a Levite had no business being in another man's home, serving as his personal priest, but they did not seem troubled by the offense.

Instead, they sought "a word from the Lord" from Micah's priest as to whether or not they could take the land. The Levite responded favorably, which was enough for the spies.

On their return journey, however, they stop at Micah's house—to entice the Levite to be their personal priest. Their bribe is incredible!

"And they said unto (the Levite),....Go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel."

—Judges 18:19
In effect, the Danites were inviting the Levite to become "a big time operator." Why bother giving divine favor to one man when you can spread the goods among many? Or so went their reasoning. And the Levite went gladly—and carried his gods with him—to be a priest unto the tribe of Dan! Again, do you realize what is happening here? We have another case of gross __________, dear friends. And this is the way men were dealing with God in the days of the judges!

**STORY # 3: DEATH OF A CONCUBINE**

It is hard to imagine that such things were taking place among the people of God, and yet the most vulgar incident is yet to unfold. The story picks up in Judges 19.

From this record, we learn that a Levite had taken a concubine to be his wife, and that she left him to pursue other lovers. (The idea of a priest joining himself to a whore is enough of a shock for most people, but the plot sickens in this story to an incredible degree!)

We are told that the priest went after his wife—to bring her back home—and ended up spending several days at the home of the concubine's father. Once he leaves the house, however, he discovers that the journey back is long, and will necessitate stopping overnight at some point.

Now watch this—for it is an incredible detail of the story! The Levite, who now has the concubine by his side, refuses to tarry in Jerusalem (home of the Jebusites)
because...the city is not one inhabited by the children of Israel (Judges 19:12). In other words, the Levite wants to go on, until he can find a city with "his own kind" in it, to tarry there. His choice is Gibeah, which belonged to the Benjaminites.

What happens to this Levite in Gibeah is a tale of absolute horror. First of all, no one offers him a place to lodge, despite the fact that he is exhausted from his long journey. Finally, an old man opens his home to the weary travellers, who make themselves merry into the night.

And then comes the shattering knock on the door, the appearance of the men of the city, and their ugly request!

"Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him."

--Judges 19:21

Take note, dear reader, that this is not Sodom; this is a city inhabited by the people of God! And they are asking a wicked thing. This is not an act of hospitality they are participating in; it is an act of foul hostility! The men of Gibeah want to know the Levite...sexually!

In an effort to appease the sexual appetite of the men of Gibeah, the old man offers his daughter and the priest's concubine—in exchange for the welfare of the Levite! Scripture tells us how the men of Gibeah ravished the concubine all night long—and left her for dead. Cruel? Yes. But this is the way men were dealing with their fellow man during the days of the judges!
Do you know what Scripture calls such sexual deviance? (The general term, that is?) Do you think such behavior will prosper God's ultimate goal to have the earth filled with His glory? Do you see what is happening during these dark days? The author obviously wants us to see the great need here. Four times throughout the book, he says this gross ______________ and this gross ______________ is due to the fact that there is no ________ in the land!

Perhaps we need, at this point, to identify the vacuum, the devastating need, that is so clearly presented in the Book of Judges. First, however, let us identify the two infractions that have been evidenced in the above incidences:

**MICAH & DAN =**

**GROSS IDOLATRY**

How men were dealing with God!

**MEN OF GIBEAH =**

**GROSS IMMORALITY**

How men were dealing with men!

Without question, there was no unity, no godliness, no righteousness during the days of the judges. And the author attributes this, on four different occasions, to this one fact:
"In those days there was

NO KING

in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

(Judges 21:25)

The words from Ellicott's Bible Commentary on this particular verse (21:25) suffice to let us know the shocking set-back these days were for God's kingdom on earth!

"This verse, already occurring in 17:6; 18:1; 19:1, is here added once more by way of apology for the lawless crimes, terrible disasters, evaded vows, and unhallowed excesses of retribution, which it has been the painful duty of the sacred historian thus faithfully and impartially to narrate." 41

A pitiful story, isn't it? Fortunately, however, the next book in the historical record is Ruth, a story so sweet that it helps us forget the nauseating record in Judges. You're familiar with Ruth, aren't you? It's that sweet, romantic love story that makes good preaching for St. Valentine's Day—or weddings. Maybe you've heard of it somewhere else, such as a mother-daughter banquet where the speaker tenderly unfolded Ruth's commitment
to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Regardless, we all must admit it is a welcome change, content-wise, from the Book of Judges!

But wait a minute! Have you ever read the first verse of Ruth carefully—with an eye for historical fact? Does it startle you that this romantic interlude—this book that speaks of grace, and favor, and kindness, and love—takes place at a time when men are grossly out of sorts with God...and each other?! Do you know when the story found in Ruth occurs? Look at the opening line:

"Now it came to pass IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES RULED..."

—Ruth 1:1

Do you realize the implications of this, dear friends? God wants to tell us something else about the days in which the judges ruled! The Book of Ruth is not a break in the story of God's redemptive plan! It was not interjected into the canon to cushion the blow of the Book of Judges! In fact, Ruth is an extension of the historical record we saw in Judges!

God is saying through the Book of Ruth, "Yes, there was gross idolatry and gross immorality during the days of the judges. But there was something else happening then, and I want you to know about it."

What is it, then, that the Book of Ruth contributes to our understanding of God's over-all plan for Planet
Earth? Do you think He was only interested in letting us know there were some decent people, some godly relationships, some genuine worship during those dark days? Oh, no, dear friends; that would not be enough. God is on His way to building a nation, remember? We saw in the Book of Judges that a vital element of nationhood was missing from among the people of God—and that was centralized government. Do you suppose...that this story in Ruth...this story which so many see only as a romantic idyll...could actually be....political?!

Impossible, you say? Let's remind ourselves of the great need we saw in the Book of Judges. There was a vacuum, right? And the author of Judges told us no less than four times what that poverty was. Let us state it again, graphically.

Now, let us ask, "Does the Book of Ruth have anything to do with a...king?" We will have to condense the story for you—drastically—but the Book of Ruth involves the union of Boaz, a Bethlehemite, and Ruth, a Moabitess. Their first child is named Obed. Perhaps that name doesn't mean anything to you at this point, depending on how familiar you are with genealogies, but it is a highly significant name in terms of God's intent for Israel—and earth!
Look at the concluding words of the Book of Ruth:

"And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat...David."
--Ruth 4:22

Do you see something incredible here? All through the Book of Judges, the author laments the fact that Israel has no king. But, look! God is at work in the Book of Ruth, and guess what He is doing?! He's making provision for a... king!

"In the days when the judges ruled..."
GOD WAS PROVIDING A KING!

Are you encouraged by God's ways? Dear friends, even in the darkest hour, God is still in control! His providence is just as sure as His sovereignty, and His ways are past finding out! Hallelujah!
Now watch—because we are not done with the Book of Ruth yet. You see, there is more to this beautiful pastoral story than the introduction of Israel’s future king! You can be assured that in making provision for His immediate goal (in this case, the building of a nation), God is usually, at the same time, making preparation for His ultimate goal (an earth filled with the glory of the Lord).

According to the above principle, the building of a nation is not an end in itself. Likewise, the provision of a king for Israel (yet future) is not an end in itself. In fact, the story found in the Book of Ruth is not an end in itself! Knowing this truth, then, is there anything in the Book of Ruth that has to do with progress of redemption...with God’s ultimate purpose for the world?

Indeed there is! Let’s reconsider a fact we merely touched upon lightly earlier—the fact that Ruth was a Moabitess. She was not an Israelite—and yet—God has made her...a relative of Jesus Christ, Israel’s Messiah and earth’s Eternal King! The unfathomable implications
of this act of grace (this act of God!) are recorded below:

"In the conversion of Ruth the Moabitess, and the bringing of her into the pedigree of the Messiah, we have a type of the calling of the Gentiles in due time into the fellowship of Christ Jesus our Lord." 42

You might be asking yourself, "How can this be? A Gentile in the Messianic line?" Keep in mind that God's ultimate goal involves, not just the Jews, but all the peoples of the earth. All. Including the Gentiles. You see, it isn't only Ruth who is a Gentile in this story. We said Boaz was a Bethlehemite, didn't we? But, according to Scripture, Boaz's lineage traces back to Rahab—a Gentile and a harlot!

"...Boaz was the son of Salmon (Salm., I Chron. 2:11) and Rachab (Matt.1:5), whom there can be no reasonable grounds for supposing to be other than the Rahab of Jericho...." 43

How could a Gentile, let alone a harlot, be involved in something that we tend to think of as thoroughly Jewish? Our only answer to this is that God chooses whom He will. We will see other occasions when He will choose contrary to man's expectations, you can be sure of it!
We said at the first that the Book of Ruth was not exclusively a story of romance, although we will here admit that it is widely recognized as a masterpiece of such literary genre. Let it be understood, however, that we did not downplay the romantic element of the story out of a disregard for the tender and precious. Rather, we did so in order to show how the events in this story go beyond the idyllic and serve as the crucial connection between the Book of Judges (which practically screams out, "We need a king!") and the historical accounts we find in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles (all of which contain regal material!).

Besides, if you look at the Book of Ruth as being only a romantic tale, who ever heard of a romance novel ending with a genealogy?! We know, now, of course, that the purpose of the genealogy is to introduce the character of David, but, also, to show us how a Gentile fits into the royal and redemptive lineage.
We emphasized at the beginning of this study that Scripture contains a highly selective history. That is, God focuses in His Word only on those particular facts, events, places and figures that lend to the understanding and unfolding of His glorious redemption.

This peculiar aspect of the Bible—this underscoring of the critical—is perhaps nowhere evidenced so clearly, nor solidly, as in the record now before us. Merrill F. Unger makes the following comments regarding the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. Note what he considers to be the distinctive element of this material.

"1 and 2 Samuel constitute some of the finest historical writing in all literature. Written largely as historical biography, these narratives differ from contemporary documents (Assyrian, Egyptian, Hittite) in not being the mere pegging out of events on the line of time. The events themselves are stressed, and the moral and spiritual repercussions of these events and of the persons involved are highlighted. Accordingly, these books have eminent ethical and didactic value." 44
In light of Unger's comment, then, it is not surprising to find the content of 1 Samuel centered around three key individuals and the enlargement of various single events in their lives. The three biographies involve:

**SAMUEL: ISRAEL'S LAST JUDGE**

**SAUL: ISRAEL'S FIRST KING**

**DAVID: ISRAEL'S SUPREME KING**

Our focus here will be on the life of Samuel as recorded in 1 Samuel 1 through 7. This segment of Scripture is, indeed, strongly biographical and, yet, incredibly select, as we shall see.

**1 SAMUEL: ITS PLACE IN GOD'S PURPOSES**

We noted that the key issue in the Book of Judges was the fact that Israel sorely lacked unity and central leadership. We also saw how the Book of Ruth related to that awful void in that God was setting into motion the fulfillment of the need through the birth of David, Israel's future king. But what about 1 Samuel 1 through 7? How do the events here relate to the life of the nation and,
beyond that, to the salvific work of God on earth?

It is our premise that these chapters, although few in number, and the Spirit-anointed man they feature, contribute measurable success to those plans held in precious regard by our God!

**A BAREN WOMAN’S PRAYER**

The opening scene of 1 Samuel features a recurrent motif in God’s redemptive program: the cry of a barren woman. But here we have perhaps a pathos more extreme than that seen in the patriarchs’ wives, who also suffered this same reproach.

Indeed, as we read this sensitive account, we should be mindful of the rare privilege that is ours—only the Spirit of God could probe the inward depths of a woman’s soul to this degree, and record for us such desperate, intimate grief!

The woman we are speaking of in the above paragraphs is Hannah, one of the two wives of Elkanah, a Levite who lived at Ramathaim-zophim, a village of Ephraim, in the latter days of the judges.45

As we read Hannah’s story, however, we should realize
that the author's intent in recording her bitterness of soul goes beyond what we witnessed with Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel. That is, the author has not recorded Hannah's barrenness merely to let us see that God can meet her need. Hopefully, we already know by now that God is able to open the womb and to lift the countenance of the childless.

So what is the author trying to tell us in this scene? Remember what Unger said? The moral and spiritual repercussions of events are stressed in this history! This implies one thing: the author desires to tell us something about the moral and spiritual conditions of the time through the events he records.

In this respect, then, the author's focus in 1 Samuel 1 is not on Hannah alone, but includes the climate, activities and people within the circumference of her experience. It is important to observe, for example, that Hannah's prayer for a child is not uttered while she is kneeling at the foot of her bed. Rather, she is at the house of the Lord--the temple in Shiloh--weeping sore. And her agony is being witnessed by Eli, Israel's high priest. Eli's perception of Hannah is a critical--and scandalous--element of the story. We pick it up in verse 10, noting that Eli is observing Hannah from a temple vantage point:

"And (Hannah) was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

"And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

Before we look at Eli's response to Hannah's prayer, it is important to realize here that Hannah is not making a selfish request. She doesn't want a baby so she can parade her motherhood before the world. She doesn't want a baby in order to possess it, to amuse herself with it, nor to guarantee companionship in her old age. We need to mark her godly motive. Hannah desires a child, not for herself, but for the Lord. Her request is not, "Give me a child in order to enhance my standing before the world", but, "Give me a child who will enlarge the sphere of Your glory before men."

Her example, to be sure, is most convicting when it comes to our own self-centeredness in "making our requests known to God." When we ask the Lord for something—whether it be a husband, an increase in pay, a new car, or a day of rest—is our request only to satisfy our inward longings; or do we ask to the end that God might be exalted and magnified?

Well, we need to get back to the temple. Eli, you will recall, is observing Hannah's anguish before God. Scripture says that, as she continued her prayer before the Lord, Eli marked her mouth. (1 Samuel 1:12). Verse 13 tells us why he is so fixed on this aspect:

"Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been _____."

We have purposefully left a blank where Scripture renders Eli's judgment in order that we might bring this scene into the present day. That is, we want you to imagine
what you would think if this Sunday, as you stood on the steps of a local church, you saw someone off in the corner of the church property, seemingly muttering to himself. Would you consider that person mentally imbalanced? high on drugs? intoxicated? Dear friends, such is the equivalent of Eli's judgment: he surmised that Hannah was...drunk!!! It didn't even enter his mind that she might be praying!

Matthew Henry's terse comments on this situation suffice to tell us something of the times:

"Perhaps in this degenerate age it was no strange thing to see drunken women at the door of the tabernacle. When a disease is epidemic, every one is suspected to be tainted with it."46

In short, in Eli's eyes, Hannah was just "another one of those drunk women" who frequented the house of God. Apparently, this was not an unusual occurrence in that day, as Eli seems more agitated by Hannah's behavior than shocked. We learn from the remaining account, however, that Eli does finally censure her for her supposed state, though, even here, his words are spoken neither out of righteous indignation nor pity at her sorry condition. It is as if his words were directed at a stray dog, and communicated nothing more than, "Shoo! Get off my property!"

Once Eli learns the truth, however, he does tender his rebuke and sends Hannah away with blessing and assurance that God will answer her more kindly than he. But, to be sure, the author does not want us to soon forget the spiritual implications of this event!
HANNAH LEAVES SAMUEL AT THE TEMPLE

We learn towards the end of 1 Samuel 1 that God, indeed, answered Hannah's prayer, and Hannah, likewise, kept her vow to the Lord to bring her son, Samuel, to the tabernacle at Shiloh, "to abide there forever" (1 Samuel 1:22).

Samuel was perhaps three years old when his mother dedicated him to the Lord, and presented him to Eli, the same high priest who had accused her years before of being drunk at the temple door. And we know through what is reported in chapter 2 that the religious climate in Israel plummeted with each passing day. In essence, the spiritual leadership of the nation was just as weak and flagging as was the political leadership that characterized the land at this time.

In order to fully appreciate Hannah's faithfulness to her vow, we need to ask ourselves if we would leave one of our own children, say, in the church nursery, knowing that drunkards frequented the place, and other acts of immorality were openly perpetrated. For such was the atmosphere Samuel was to grow up in—even within the walls of the temple!

The author does not gloss over the travesties of temple service under Eli. We are told blunt, horrifying facts about what was taking place in the house of God. Eli's sons were desecrating the sacrifices and laying
with the women that assembled at the door of the taber-
nacle (1 Samuel 2:22,29)!!! You see what is happening, don't you? In the Book of Judges, the author was telling us how the people of God were steeped in gross idolatry and immorality. Here, in 1 Samuel, we find the priests engaged in the same grotesque offences!

**THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE LATTER DAYS OF THE JUDGES:**

- Stealing the sacrifices = **GROSS IDOLATRY**
- Laying with women = **GROSS IMMORALITY**

What about Samuel, Hannah's little boy? How was he affected by all this? Scripture gives an incredible account, and one which would seem impossible were it not for the fact that Samuel has been chosen of God for a divine purpose!

"And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men."

--- 1 Samuel 2:26
Although the first two chapters of 1 Samuel deal in some respect with the life of Samuel, it isn't until chapter 3 that we find the spotlight directly on him. And what an incident God chooses to underscore!

At the beginning of this highlighted narrative, we are told that Samuel—still a child—is with Eli, ministering before the Lord. Right on the heels of that information, however, is this strange editorial:

"And the word of the Lord was precious in those days..."

Precious? The word of the Lord was precious? Does the author really mean that? Doesn't the word "precious" connote "valued", "highly esteemed", "prized"? How can the writer suggest that God's word was revered in such a diabolic day?

We need to be careful, in reading the Word of God, that we don't put our present-day definitions of words on the text. We can see from the rest of the verse, quoted below, that the author didn't mean "precious" as we understand it. He meant, instead, that the Word of God was rare...infrequent...in that day:
"And the word of the Lord was rare in those days, visions were infrequent."

NASB

The significance of the above editorial is related by one commentary in the following manner:

"The word of the Lord was rare. This is both an introduction to the narrative that follows and a statement of Israel's sorry plight. Probably we are to assume that the faults of Eli's family had occasioned the rarity of the divine voice."47

The author of 1 Samuel wants to make one thing clear before he continues his account: GOD HAS NOT SPOKEN IN A LONG TIME! And that's precisely why this narrative is so paramount, for we read in verse 4 that "the Lord called Samuel": And He called him no less than three times! (verses 4, 6, 8).

In fact, God gives Samuel a direct revelation regarding the destruction of Eli's house for the high priest's slack in correcting the vile ways of his sons. (verses 11-14) So it's not just that God called Samuel's name; He spoke to him! Do you know what that makes Samuel in the program of God? It makes him a
A brief definition of a prophet is given below:

"True prophets declare the word which the Lord has spoken to them...the contents of the prophecy have not originated in their own reflection or calculation; and just as little is this prophecy the product of their own feelings, fears, or hopes, but, as something extraneous to man and independent of him, it has with a Divine certainty entered the soul of the prophet." 48

It should be noted here that Samuel is considered the first of the prophets 49, even though others, such as Moses, were called "prophets". The distinguishing characteristic of Samuel the prophet is that God establishes the prophetic office or order through him. (1 Samuel 3:20; Acts 3:24; 13:20). That is, there will be a succession of prophets, raised up by God to execute a vital and dynamic function in Israel. G. Campbell Morgan gives us a glimpse of the importance of Samuel's election in this respect:

"God never spoke to His nation through their kings, never—the kingly office was never recognized by the divine revelation of the will of God in that way. Oh yes, He spoke to the kings but through the prophets; and Samuel began that order, began the exercise of that work." 50
It should be noted here that the establishment of the prophetic office marks a major thrust in the program of God. That is, in respect to nationhood, the Divine economy calls for a prophet, priest and king, all functioning as separate offices.

Although we did not mention it specifically in Step 6, the establishment of the priesthood came during Israel's year-long encampment at the foot of Mt. Sinai, during which time God imparted a whole way of life (culture) for observance by His people. This included a system of worship.

Now, with Samuel's call, we see the prophetic institution emerge, which means Israel lacks only a king to complete her theocratic statehood.

STEP 9

Israel is settled in the land. She now, with Samuel's call, has a prophet and a priest, yet still needs a... king to be a bona fide nation before her God.

In relationship to the above need, it will be Samuel who will introduce us to Israel's first two kings. But before we hasten too quickly to that historic occasion, it behooves us to weigh Samuel's influence and power as Israel's last
judge and the contribution he made as her respected states-
man.

**SAMUEL'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

Samuel's call as a prophet is a monumental episode--
for several reasons. For nearly four centuries, God had
been silent toward His people. He broke that silence by
speaking to a mere child! Have you ever considered that?!
When we say that Samuel was the first of the prophets, let
us not be so impressed with the title that we forget the
prophetic office began with a boy who was probably less
than 12-years-old!

![Samuel: a prophet, yes--but also a boy under 12
years of age!](image)

Would you impart spiritual authority to a 12-year-old
at a time when national morale had hit rock-bottom and
leadership rose and fell as quickly as the waves of crises
that battered various sections of the country? Wouldn't
a leader of Moses' or Joshua's caliber be a more appro-
priate solution? We see here, once again, that God's
method of operation is not what we would engage, although,
at the same time, we must acknowledge that His ways are perfect.

Moreover, Scripture confirms God's choice of Samuel as an exemplary leader—both in his judgeship and his role as prophet. For example, his leadership as a judge far exceeded that of his predecessors. Other judges, you will recall, ruled briefly and only over a limited domain. In contrast, Samuel maintained his judgeship for forty years, and was recognized as one having great authority.51

Samuel's judgeship:

* as a circuit judge, he had extended authority
* his judicial rule expanded a lifetime
* he ruled during periods of peace, as well as during crises
* all Israel recognized him as a man anointed by God

In his role as prophet, he is likewise characterized by strong leadership abilities. In fact, his role as God's first messenger made an impact upon the religious and political life of Israel that continued beyond his times.52
Indeed, the hallmark of Samuel's career was his ability to unify the separate tribes of Israel into one league, not only for the sake of military prowess, but also as an impetus for socio-religious solidarity and nationalist fervor.

* This is the first time in a long time that Israel is united under the authority of one central figure!

Without question, the reason Samuel was able to accomplish this most improbable task was the recognition by all Israel that he was God's man for the hour.

"And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord."

--1 Samuel 3:20

You can see from the above passage, then, that Samuel's authority transcended tribal provincialism. In fact, upon consulting a map, we learn the true scope of Samuel's influence. When the author mentions "Dan to Beersheba", he is really saying this:
"From one end of the country to the other, Samuel was recognized as God's authority in the land."

The ability of this charismatic leader to mobilize the people of God is seen again in 1 Samuel 4-7. The opening lines of this section tell us the incredible fact that "(all) Israel" went out against the Philistines. Remember what happened under the judges?

"Judah and Simeon went up..."

"Joseph went up"  "Manasseh went up"

"Asher went"  "Naphtali went up"

JUDGES 1:1ff
There can be little doubt that it was Samuel's influence that wrought Israel's mobilization against the Philistines, for even though his name is absent in the account of her precarious siege (1 Samuel 4-6), it appears at battle's end—where Samuel looms as the sole administrator of blessing, exhortation and vision! (See 1 Samuel 7)

Indeed, one author notes that it was "only the personality and achievement of Samuel, and his inauguration of the monarchy, (that) saved Israel's national identity" after the destruction of the inter-tribal sanctuary at Shiloh and the humiliating confiscation of the ark. (The latter event, in Israel's eyes, was equivalent to the enemy holding Jehovah Himself captive!)

Well, thus far we have credited Samuel with strong leadership and the unification of Israel--preliminary elements to her establishment as a genuine nation. But Samuel's influence touched another vital sphere—not just in terms of the nation—but in relationship to God's universal aim.

You see, unity among God's people is not enough to facilitate His goal, whether that goal is the establishment of a priest-nation, or the enshrinement of God's glory among all the inhabitants of earth. There must also be godliness.

GOD'S ULTIMATE GOAL INVOLVES A PEOPLE ON EARTH WHO ARE CHARACTERIZED BY UNITY AND GODLINESS.
The account we find in 1 Samuel 7 certainly reminds us that Samuel was first of all a priest, and then a judge and prophet. That is, we see here that the lad who Hannah dedicated to the Lord remained faithful to his original calling. In chapter 3, we saw a young boy in the temple, serving the Lord, and growing in favor with both God and man. Now, many years later, we find the mature man of God still seeking to fulfill reconciliation between Jehovah and His people. The call to godliness issues from the bowels of the inward man:

"And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only..."

--1 Samuel 7:3

And what were the results of Samuel's priestly concern?

"Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only."

--1 Samuel 7:4

Samuel's fervent, effectual prayer on behalf of Israel not only brought spiritual revival to the camp of Israel; it also secured Jehovah's power on behalf of His people in defeating the Philistines! ("And Samuel
cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him... and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel." -- 1 Samuel 7:9,13)

Indeed, as Matthew Henry observes, one must surely credit Samuel for securing the public peace in Israel (v. 13 - "In his days the Philistines came no more into the coast of Israel."), but one must likewise acknowledge the sanctity of his effort.

"Samuel was a protector and deliverer to Israel, not by dint of sword, as Gideon, nor by strength of arm, as Samson, but by the power of prayer to God and carrying on a work of reformation among the people." 54

Truly, as we look at Samuel's life, we are made aware of the awesome, yet inspiring, fact that one man, yielded to God, can and does make a difference in supreme and eternal matters. Leon Wood, in his book, Distressing Days of the Judges, notes:

"Samuel purposed to effect a change in the spiritual relationship between the Israelites and God, and pure determination and dedication over a twenty-year period brought the necessary revival." 55
After studying Samuel's incredible achievements in the last section, one cannot help but anticipate that the next logical sequence in God's nation-building should be the establishment of a regal authority over the people of God.

In fact, all the steps that we have traced thus far—steps which we deem preparatory to nationhood—demand a king.
Upon reading 1 Samuel 8, however, one gets the gut impression that he has chosen the worst possible moment to look in on God's people, especially since the tone of the entire chapter suggests that something precarious--something shamefully foul--has just happened to retard God's progress in building a great nation!

**THE INITIAL PROBLEM**

The first few verses of chapter 8 introduce us to the problem that precipitates an even graver situation a little later in the text, and that is the fact that Samuel unwisely appointed his sons to succeed his judgeship.

The error of this act by Samuel is two-fold. First of all, we know from our study in the Book of Judges that it was God who raised up judges! They were a product of the Divine Choice, and, consequently, did not gain their appointment through the approval of men. Indeed, Samuel's bid to establish family succession was an ill-fated endeavor.

"...the Lord raised up judges."

--Judges 2:16

Secondly, Samuel's sons exhibited marked deviance from his ways, and were unworthy to claim--or even be under
the umbrella of—their father's theocratic anointing. Scripture tells us that greed, ill-gain and injustice characterized the sons of the man who had brought Israel to her knees short years before. (1 Samuel 8:3)

The very fact that it was the elders of Israel (1 Samuel 8:4) who recognized that Samuel's sons were unfit to rule tells us something of the influence for righteousness which Samuel wielded in the latter days of the judges!

Indeed, you will recall (from an earlier part of this study) how both people and priests had wallowed in the mud of their own misdeeds during those days in which there was no king in the land, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. In light of such a background, then, it seems that these elders—these spiritual leaders of Israel—were taking commendable action in asking Samuel to set the situation aright.

But Scripture says that Samuel was "displeased" with the elders' request. And, surprisingly, he was displeased because they had asked for a...king!

"...all the elders of Israel...came to Samuel...and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

Is this not a strange thing—that Samuel would be offended at the request for a king, especially in view of the fact that the clarion call of the Book of Judges
Moreover, in the Book of Ruth, we saw God at work "behind the scenes", emphasizing the genealogy that would eventually produce Israel's desired king!

"And Boaz begat Obed, And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat...

And if that were not enough, we also can go back to Moses and the Deuteronomic law and see that God—long before Israel ever entered Canaan—not only provided guidelines for the election of a king, but also enumerated his respective duties besides! (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)
"When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein...thou shalt set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose..."

--Deuteronomy 17:14,15

In view of the above facts, we need to ask if it was really wrong for the people to ask for a king at this time, especially since such a request seems to be the most obvious and natural "next step" in God's program. Many who have studied this passage think the elders were wrong in asking for a king. For sure, Samuel thought they were asking amiss, and interprets their rejection of his sons and their desire for a king as a personal affront:

Samuel: "You have rejected me."

Before we hastily preclude that Samuel is engaging in a touch of self-pity here, we need to read a little further, for God sees this request, not as a slam against Samuel, but as an assault upon His own gracious sovereignty!
"And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."

(1 Samuel 8:7)

Why would God interpret the people's request for a king "like the other nations" as a rejection of Himself? To fully understand the ramifications of this present scene, we need to go back to Mt. Sinai (Step 6). It was at Mt. Sinai, you will recall, that God instituted a royal covenant between Himself and Israel. That is, it was here that Jehovah had vowed to be Israel's king, and where Israel emphatically pledged, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Exodus 19:8)

Leon Wood explains, in light of the above covenant, why this request was such a personal affront to God:

"In calling (Israel) as a special people, God had entrusted them with the high theocratic form of government, and the people said by this action that they did not want it; they wanted a monarchy instead."57
Do you know what a monarchy is, and what it has to offer compared to a theocracy? Dear friends, the two are worlds apart! A monarchy is a man-ruled government. A monarch cannot appeal to the Living God in the execution of his stately duties! Rather, a monarch's wisdom, authority, power and resources are defined—and consequently limited—by his own humanness and level of potentiality.

In a theocracy, however, God chooses a man—a strong personal leader—as His special representative and makes available to that man no less than the sum total of His infinite majesty (Sovereign greatness, power, and authority... regal dignity, splendor and grandeur!)

MONARCHY: MAN-RULED GOVERNMENT
Surely, you can see from the above illustration why God saw the rejection of the theocracy as a rejection of Himself! In short, by electing a monarchy, Israel was saying, "We are tired of calling on God. We are tired of counting on God. We are tired of waiting on God. The nations surrounding us are going out to battle, enlarging their borders, displaying their might; give us a king like the other nations have, and we will move in that direction, too!"

Indeed, we cannot begin to comprehend the magnitude of Israel's offense here. You see, America may print "In God we
trust" on her coins, and may claim to be "one nation under God" in her Pledge of Allegiance, but America is not a theocratic nation! That distinctive belongs to Israel alone! That is, Israel is the only nation to which God has ever extended the offer of a theocratic operation and, here, she has rejected it!

GOD HAD NOT DETERMINED TO OPERATE THEOCRATICALLY THROUGH ANY NATION ON EARTH OTHER THAN ISRAEL, AND HER RESPONSE IS, "WE DON'T WANT IT!"

Perhaps, now, you can better understand the overcast atmosphere of this chapter and the sullen responses of Samuel and his Lord to the people's impudent request. It should be seen from all of this, too, that the people's request for a king was not wrong in and of itself. Rather, it was the motivation behind their request and its attending arrogance that smote the very heart of God. As one source put it:

"...the people's desire for a king originated from a purely national and not from a religious motive."60

Moreover, in asking Samuel to establish a king over them, the people were by-passing God as the channel for meeting their needs! Do you remember how many times during
Israel's apostasy under the judges that God heard their cries and delivered them? Would His mercies not be new in this situation, and His faithfulness sure?

We said earlier that God is building this nation. The All-Wise God. We need to keep this fact in mind as we examine what God does with the people's request. We need to keep in mind that He knows what is best for His people, just as parents often know what is best for their children, although children may question this.

You see, at this point in the story, God must either honor the people's request for a king—or overrule their desire and give them what is best for them. The people, mind you, are asking for Option A, a monarchy. God's way, on the other hand, has always been to work through a man, which is Option B, a theocracy. If you had to decide for Israel at this point, which route would you select?

Option A: a monarchy
Option B: a theocracy
Do you know which alternative God choose for Israel? The concluding words of chapter 8 tell the verdict. God says to Samuel, "Go ahead, Samuel, listen to the demand of the people. Honor it. Give them a king."

**A RENDEZVOUS WITH ROYALTY**

Without question, the story we find in 1 Samuel 9 seems, at first, an unlikely sequel to the crisis presented in chapter 8.

What do we read in 1 Samuel 9? A story about a young man who is desperate to find his father's lost donkeys! Now really, why does such a trivial incident merit such prominence when the more important kingship issue in Israel has just reached crisis proportions?! Has the historian abandoned logic in choosing to feature such an irrelevant tale at this time?!

It may appear that way, but we know, from past occasions, that every portion of Scripture fits into the unfolding of a marvelous drama, and chapter 9 is no exception. You see, the young man whom chapter 9 introduces to us is Saul, the son of Kish. Do you associate the name "Saul" with anything in God's redemptive program?

Indeed, the words of introduction which Scripture gives to Saul should convince the reader that more will follow regarding this noble figure. That is, the focus on Saul's high qualities in verse three are not happenchance or incidental. God wants us to know something about Saul's personhood--immediately! The description of Saul in verse
three is so impressive that the author may as well have written in parentheses, "Mark this man; he's going to be God's man of the hour!"

"And (Kish) had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he."

(1 Samuel 9:2)

Indeed, as one continues to read this passage, it soon becomes evident as to why the author has interrupted the natural flow of the narrative to introduce, in "Bulletin!" fashion, the highlights of Saul's person.

You see, dear friends, 1 Samuel 9 is not, primarily, a story about a young man who is desperate to find his father's lost donkeys! Rather, it is a continuation of 1 Samuel 8, in that Samuel herein engages in what?--the private anointing of Saul as Israel's first king!

The search for the lost donkeys merely facilitated the initial--and predetermined--meeting between the prophet Samuel and the king-elect! (see 1 Samuel 9:6-14) That is, Saul is persuaded by his servant to enquire of a prophet as to the whereabouts of his father's donkeys, and this pursuit leads him straight to Samuel.

But note that we have underscored the predetermined aspect of this meeting. Even in view of his suggestion to
make enquiry of a seer (prophet), Saul's servant cannot be credited with effecting this encounter between anointer and anointee. Rather, Scripture clearly shows us it was entirely God's doings:

"Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me."

—1 Samuel 9:15,16

Do you see the implications of the above verses?! At the end of chapter 8, we saw how God, offended by Israel's request for a king, nevertheless said to Samuel, "If that's what they want, give it to them!" But, wait! Who is making this choice? Samuel? The people? No, God has selected Israel's king-elect!

In fact, we read later (1 Samuel 10:6) that God sent His Spirit upon Saul, guaranteeing that he would "be turned into another man" (spiritual renewal). Saul was also to be given prophetic utterance (1 Samuel 10:6), and the assurance that

GOD IS WITH THEE.
Do you know what these three signs (the Spirit, regeneration, prophetic utterance) confirm about Saul? If God is "with a man", He is what? He is working through that man, right? And if God is operating through a man, it is no less than a theocratic operation! In short, then, God did not give Israel a monarch, as they desired; He gave them the man of His choice: a strong personal leader entrusted with no less than the sum total of God's infinite majesty!

In choosing Saul, and in giving him Divine enablement, God gave Israel Option B: a theocracy!

Aren't you glad that God, with paternal concern and Creator wisdom, gives us what is best for us, in spite of ourselves and our selfish wants? Yes, God was displeased with Israel's request, but He did not abort His mercies out of disgust. He never does; He never will. As one author writes:
"...God direct(ed) Samuel to give them a king...not according to their desire, but in accordance with the instructions of the law concerning kings (Dt 17:14-20), in order to safeguard their liberties and prevent the forfeiture of their mission."61

And so it is that God gives Israel her first theocratic king. But even beyond that, Saul's inauguration makes Israel--the Nation--the first theocracy that has ever existed on the face of the earth!

THE THEOCRATIC PROCESS

As we have mentioned above, Deuteronomy 17:14-20 lists the conditions for the establishment of the throne and, consequently, the theocratic office, in Israel. Of initial importance in this process is the fact that the king is to be Jehovah's choice, the man of His own choosing.

As noted in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Vol. 3), "The choice of Jehovah in the case of Saul is implied by the anointing of Saul by Samuel and through the confirmation of this choice by the holy lot (1 Samuel 10:1-20)" and the acknowledgement of Saul as king by the people (1 Samuel 10:24).62

That is, the theocratic process involves, first, the call of God upon a man's life, and the confirmation of that call; and, secondly, the acknowledgement of God's
people that the said individual has been selected by God as His special representative and servant. A third factor involved in the theocratic process (the only politic God knows) is that God always tests His man!

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<th>STEPS IN THE THEOCRATIC PROCESS</th>
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<td>![Symbol] God calls His man, and confirms to that particular individual the sureness of his election.</td>
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<td>![Symbol] That leader is presented to God's people in order that they, too, might know and confirm the Lord's claim on his life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>![Symbol] God proves the fitness of the individual He has called by testing his faithfulness in the daily execution of his duties and office.</td>
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In Saul's case, we find his calling in 1 Samuel 10:1 where Samuel privately anoints the king-elect and assures him that

"...the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance."
What is so precious about this private anointing is God's carefullness to **personally** assure Saul that Samuel was acting on God's behalf in anointing him king. The prophet could have said, "You are elected!", and walked away from a dumbfounded Saul. God, however, does not deal with men this way, especially His "Hand-picked" leaders. No, Saul needed some individual attention from God, some personal assurance that God was with him! To assure Saul of his calling, God tells him to watch for a series of signs as he returns home (see 1 Samuel 10:1-7)

Saul's nomination to the throne is made public at Mizpeh through the casting of the lot—an event witnessed by **all** of Israel. (1 Samuel 10:17ff). As we read this account, we find that the lot falls to the tribe of Benjamin, and, more specifically, to Saul the son of Kish (verse 21). We also learn that Saul hides when his name is called; he doesn't think he can do the job! And God will always look for a man like this; it is the proud He opposes.

You might be wondering why it was necessary to cast lots in view of the fact that God had already selected Saul earlier. Matthew Henry explains the necessity of this public presentation:

"By this method (the casting of lots) it would appear to the people, as it already appeared to Samuel, that Saul was appointed of God to be king; for the disposal of the lot is of the Lord."63
Thus, we see in Saul's life two aspects of the theocratic process already fulfilled: 1. his own call and confirmation, and, 2. the fact that the people now know that God has selected Saul. The third element, that of testing, follows immediately, and is recorded in 1 Samuel 11.

Saul, you will remember, was anointed by Samuel to be captain over the Lord's inheritance, to deliver Israel from her enemies. Saul is challenged in this area when the Ammonites, because of their awesome power, try to intimidate the men of Jabesh-gilead into voluntary servitude since the people had no deliverer. In addition to subjecting them to servitude, however, the Ammonites also threatened to thrust out the right eye of each inhabitant as a reproach against "powerless Israel."

When Saul heard of this gross insult, Scripture says:

"And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly."

--1 Samuel 11:6

The Spirit came mightily upon Saul. Is this not a theocracy? Indeed, Saul rallies Israel to the cause, and the men of Jabesh-gilead are helped. In fact, the Ammonites are so sorely defeated that not two of them could be found together! (1 Samuel 11:12). Now how do you suppose Israel won this battle? Did Saul deliver? No. If he had, it
would not have been a true theocratic operation! Saul tells how the victory was attained when he declares to the people:

"Today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." (1 Samuel 11:13)

Indeed, Saul's action, as well as his attitude, proved his ability to function as a theocratic leader. He had passed the first test with flying colors. As Merrill F. Unger observes:

"Saul was making a good start." 64

Consequently, then, Saul is inaugurated at Gilgal and becomes head of the first theocratic kingdom ever to exist on the face of the earth! Despite Israel's wrong motives in asking for a king, God has given them His best, and now asks only that the people and their king follow in His ways and not do wickedly. 1 Samuel 12 ends with a solemn note:

"But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." (verse 25)
As Unger previously pointed out, Saul's theocratic victory against the Ammonites and his obvious anointing by the Spirit of God caused him to be favored by the people and celebrated by the historian as one who had begun well. Indeed, in the early days of Saul's reign, Samuel's ominous warning about departing from the ways of Jehovah may have seemed an unnecessary precaution.

Unfortunately, however, Saul rapidly digresses from paths of righteousness and obedience, making him, perhaps, the most tragic of all Bible figures. Indeed, he is the only one whose spirit seems to yet brood over the pages wherein the dark account of his life is recorded, rendering 1 Samuel 13-31 a noticeable "haunted" segment of Scripture!

Saul's first failure as a theocratic leader is recorded in 1 Samuel 13:9, where we find him intruding upon the priestly office and offering a sacrifice. He justifies his wrongdoing to Samuel by citing the circumstances (the press of the Philistines and Samuel's lateness in coming to Gilgal) and his own "godly" hesitation in making the sacrifice ("I forced myself..." - 1 Samuel 13:12).

Samuel is not impressed with Saul's impatience nor his patting himself on the back, and reproves him for having acted so foolishly. The result of Saul's brashness is far more staggering than what today's reader is able to grasp at first. Samuel tells Saul that his kingdom--which would have endured forever--would not continue! (1 Samuel 13:14).
God had promised Saul a continuous kingdom:

\[
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\text{An eternal kingdom.}
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But it's not just that God is cutting off the continuance of Saul's throne here that is so tragic. Saul, through this pompous act, has forfeited a very unusual offer from God! You see, according to prophecy, the eternal kingdom was to arise from where? The tribe of Judah! (Genesis 49:10). Saul, you will remember, is a Benjaminite--and yet God had apparently intended to establish his kingdom permanently--if Saul had been faithful in his office!

We cannot know whether Saul's obedience would have meant that God would have been obliged to have two separate theocratic operations going on at the same time; we can only know that His offer to Saul was a bona fide offer--and this is what Saul lost through unbelief and rebellion!

Just as God had offered to raise up a new nation through Moses' seed in Exodus 32:10, so God offers to Saul, with the same legitimacy, a continual kingdom--but Saul forfeits it!
We need to point out one very important thing here regarding God's offer to establish Saul as king forever. God did not bait Saul by offering him something He never intended to make good. Nor did God offer the kingdom so He could gloat when Saul fell short and did not receive the promise. God is not like that! He chooses to operate theocratically (through a man), but He never "uses" that man in a demeaning way. We must believe that if Saul had obeyed, God would have established his throne forever, even though, according to Scripture, Judah was to be the kingly line.

Moreover, even though God here rejects Saul's line, He does not abandon the man—even though Saul has blown it. In 1 Samuel 14:47, we read that Saul did valiantly against his enemies, that "whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them." In other words, God was still working through Saul and bringing him victory, even though He had rejected Saul's line.

God cuts off Saul's line, but is still "with him" in battle.

We said earlier that God will prove the fitness of His chosen servant through a series of testings. Saul may have been victorious in war, but he seemed to have a great deal of trouble in the area of worship. Just as his first stumbling block was in regards to sacrifice, so was his second offence in that same area.
Saul's second failure is recorded in 1 Samuel 15. God had instructed Saul to "utterly destroy" the Amalekites for their lack of mercy upon Israel during their wilderness journey (see Exodus 17:8ff). Instead of obeying the commandment of the Lord, however, Saul spares Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and also preserves alive some choice sheep and oxen, which Saul thought God might appreciate as sacrifices to Him. Again, Saul seems to pat himself on the back for such a goodly deed. Samuel's response, and God's judgement, ring more severe than at the first.

"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

---1 Samuel 15:22

Saul had been told not to spare anything; his disobedience was deliberate. Rebellion hinders the operation of God; He cannot work through a disobedient channel. As a consequence, God rejects Saul, personally!

Samuel: "Because thou (Saul) hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king."

---1 Samuel 15:23

This devastating blow to Saul, mind you, is not because of immorality, but because of his disobedience, even in worship! Not only is Saul cut off from God because of his rebellion, he is also cut off from Samuel, the prophet, the
spokesman for God! (1 Samuel 15:26). Do you know what this is—when Saul finds himself cut off from both God and God's spokesman?! Dear friends, this is fatal. Saul no longer has access to the sum total of God's infinite majesty; he no longer has counsel and guidance from God's prophet. In short, Israel now has what she first asked God for: a monarch—a mere mortal, whose power, authority, wisdom and strength are defined, and limited, by his own human limitations!

STEP 1: God cuts off Saul's line

STEP 2: God rejects Saul as king over Israel
STEP 3: Saul is cut off from God; God’s prophet

We know, from Scripture, that Saul did not finish well. He became a man diminished by his own insanity—a man, who at the last, had only the spirit of forlornness as a faithful companion. Unbelief and rebellion have sore consequences. Saul’s life is a sober reminder of what happens to a man who does not heed the word of God.

As already noted, the rejection of Saul marks the establishment of a temporary monarchy in Israel. God, of course, cannot go with this; God will not go with this! He must find himself another man. Indeed, the announcement we find in 1 Samuel 16:1 tells us that God will not halt His purposes because of Saul’s self-imposed demise. Here God speaks the good news to a mourning Samuel:

"I have provided Me a king!"

And the next step, dear friends, is more than one marked by progress; it is couched in glory!!!
STEP ELEVEN: THE GREAT THEOCRACY
(1 Samuel 16–2 Kings 10)

There can be no doubt that, had God abandoned Israel to a monarchial form of government and to a half-mad king, Israel would have missed her hour of glory. But God's promise is to build a great nation, and His promises are sure.

As one reads the account of Saul's latter days, one realizes all too quickly that Israel would not have prospered under her pitiful and forsaken king. Nevertheless, there is always the comforting thought that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). And so, while the rejected Saul spent the last days of his reign staggering between sin and insanity, God's eyes were already fixed upon a young shepherd, a psalmist and musician to the soul, a man after God's own heart!

Indeed, the Bible historian devotes three large segments of Scripture to the call, life and rule of this man!
This extended focus on the life of David tells us that God wants us thoroughly acquainted with the man He has provided as Israel's new king ("I have provided Me a king." - 1 Samuel 16:1). David's introduction, however, is much more subtle than was Saul's, and that for a reason. God wants us to see what He looks for in a man, especially one through whom He will operate theocratically!

Remember Saul's introduction in 1 Samuel 9:3? Scripture was quick to tell us that Saul was "a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he." Likewise, when it came time for the public anointing of Saul, Scripture noted that he stood head and shoulders above anyone else (1 Samuel 10:23).
The account of David's selection as king, recorded in 1 Samuel 16:1-13, is certainly not as impressive as that of Saul's! We noted that Saul was announced in almost bulletin-like fashion: "Mark this man!" When Samuel is sent to Bethlehem to find God's choice among the sons of Jesse, however, David seems to be an after-thought in the whole process!

Have you ever wondered why God just didn't tell Samuel, "Go anoint David, Jesse's youngest son"? Keep in mind, now, that Samuel was a prophet, a man of spiritual discernment, yet watch how he operates! When Jesse gets together seven of his children (David wasn't even considered a candidate!), Samuel looks upon his first son and says, "Surely, this is he (whom God has chosen as king)!" Why? Because Eliab was a soldier; a man of imposing stature and physical strength.

Remember Saul? He, too, was impressive in his outward appearance; he towered head and shoulders above all others. But God isn't interested in height— or might; He is concerned with the man within. That is, God looks upon the heart, where man is "very man."
In David's case, his heart was where he had already "formed the habit of doing the will of God," as we shall see shortly. Indeed, God must have a man's heart (his love, his loyalty, his will) in order to operate theocratically. Saul's tragic fall can be attributed to his repeated acts of rebellion that were fostered out of an attitude that selfishly insisted, "My way, not Thy way!"

We should observe here that David's anointing is no insignificant event. As one author notes:

"David is the long foreseen, pre-elected, forethoughtfully anointed one."66

In fact, the story here reaches its goal with the anointing of David; Samuel goes home and we read nothing more about the completion of the sacrifice, the feelings of David's brothers, the elders, David's father nor David himself!67 The important thing about this narrative, then, is that the reader is subconsciously drawn into the center of God's own eternal longing, and is told in a Voice that speaks, not out of the past, but out of the Beginning, and says, "Look! This is My king!" David's anointing points to that glorious King of the final age (Isaiah 11:2)!

TESTING THE MAN: A GIANT AND A GOAD

As with Saul, so with David: God tests His man. Indeed, in David's case, a lengthy account of his testing is recorded, and that even before he ever assumes the throne!
We know from Scripture that "the Spirit came mightily" upon David (1 Samuel 16:13) from the time of his anointing onward. This filling, of course, is the essential enablement of a theocratic leader, the Divine anointing that equips a man beyond his own conscious power to fulfill the will of God.

"...and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

--1 Samuel 16:13

Saul had experienced the same thing at his anointing, but we learn here that "David gains what Saul loses." That is, the Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul (1 Samuel 16:14), and "the charismatic endowment reserved for the king of Israel passes from him to David." We need to point out something very important here. Although the Spirit of the Lord has departed from Saul, he still continues as king, and although the Spirit comes mightily upon David—the seal of his kingship—the young man goes back to...tending sheep! Be assured that David knows he is to be Israel's next king, but watch his actions until that day! Saul, you will remember, was tested after he assumed the kingly office. How would you act if you knew, by God's own confirmation, that you were elected the highest position in government? God shows us something precious and unique about David's character by showing us his actions before he assumes the office of king!
For many, David's first test may seem unrelated to the building of a great nation. In reality, however, it is highly pertinent! We are talking about the story of David and Goliath, which many have reduced to a heroic tale about a boy in combat with a brute. It is our intent here to discover how this dramatic showdown fits into the purposes of God's overall program.

Let us first say that God is trying to show us in this dramatic scene whether or not His king-elect qualifies to hold the awesome reins of theocratic rule. He needs someone who will not man-handle the work of God, who will not hinder the Almighty. Israel will never become a great nation until God is her King, and God reigns when He has a man committed to Him.

We need not go into great detail about the actual battle between David and the Philistine, Goliath. Scripture says this ungodly champion tormented the entire army of Israel for forty days, and caused even the most valiant men to tremble and fear. It is at this point that David, a mere lad, steps in and volunteers to fight this one who dares to defy the armies of the Living God! (1 Samuel 17:26)

Now watch carefully, for we are about to observe the main point of this narrative. When word comes to Saul that a shepherd boy wants to take on Goliath and remove the reproach of Israel, Saul sends for David. The king takes one look at the lad and renders the verdict that always falls from the lips of one who trusts in the flesh and who is faithless:
YOU ARE NOT ABLE!

Do those words sound familiar? They should. The spies who had gone into Canaan after the Exodus sealed the doom of an entire generation with the words, "We are not able (to take the land)! Here, Saul repeats the same verdict to David: "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine." (1 Samuel 17:33).

David's response is not one of defending himself, nor of asserting his abilities. Instead, he tells Saul about his experiences as a shepherd:

"And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."

--1 Samuel 17:34-36

Was David talking "big talk" here? After all, didn't his brother accuse him of coming to the battle front out of pride? (see 1 Samuel 17:28). Indeed, Eliab belittled David for even thinking he could take on Goliath, since,
in Eliab's eyes, David's only act of bravery was to protect a few sheep out in the field. (Note that Eliab doesn't even credit David with watching a flock! He deliberately emphasizes the word "few" in regards to the sheep.)

But David's boast is not in himself. When he says that Goliath shall be brought down, he tells why Israel's tormentor will fall.

"The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

---1 Samuel 17:37

Do you see what David is saying here?! He in no way is trying to persuade Saul or anyone else that he is able! Rather, he is confident of this:

GOD IS ABLE!

It's not only David's faith that is astounding here; he is sure of God's success because...as a shepherd, mind you, David was already experiencing the workings of a theocracy! David did not take on the lion and the bear on his own; rather, God rescued David's sheep from the
David, as a shepherd, experienced the workings of a theocracy. God rescued David's sheep through David.

David's faith, then, reasons thus: "God delivered my sheep from their enemy by working through me, and God will likewise deliver Israel from her enemy by working through me!"
David, in fact, never tells Goliath, "I have come to slay thee." Rather, his boast is in the Lord.

"This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from thee..."

--1 Samuel 17:46

Moreover, David explains why he did not fight Goliath on his own terms; i.e., sword against sword. True, Saul had offered his own armour to David (1 Samuel 17:38-39), but David refused it on the basis that he did not have time to test it out! David had already proven God's faithfulness, though.

"This day shall the Lord deliver thee into mine hand....And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

--1 Samuel 17:46,47

Do you realize what David is acknowledging above?! He is saying, "God's ways are not our's. He doesn't work the same way we do. He works in a way that clearly declares His responsibility for the end result, and His right to the glory of all that takes place."! Do you see, friends, how important this is to God's theocratic operation?
David's first test, his bout with Goliath, proved him to be a capable theocratic leader in terms of how he handled the enemy without. David relied on God, not on weapons. His trust was in Jehovah.

A good leader, however, must not only be able to deal with external opposition; he must prove himself capable of handling internal problems. (Many a pastor has discovered that internal strife within the church can be more devastating than the outward onslaught of Satan himself!)

We had mentioned in one of our subtitles that David's two areas of testing involved 1.) a giant, and 2.) a goad. A goad is an unpleasant implement used to spur a beast of burden to greater activity. Hence, it is not a welcomed form of motivation! Saul, in many respects, became a goad to David. For more than a decade, the demon-possessed king doggedly pursued the young hero, to the point that jealousy and madness were always nipping at David's heels.

How do you respond when someone is always on your back? When a person unfit to do the job remains in the office (or position) promised to you? When the attacker is a fellow-believer? When you are greatly beloved by the kin of the person who most abhors you?

Surely, David's test here is his ability to wait upon God!
And it is a test which David passes superbly! You will recall Saul's impatience when Samuel did not arrive at the appointed hour to offer a sacrifice. Saul couldn't even wait upon God a few more minutes! Do you know how long it was from the time David was anointed king by Samuel until God actually placed him upon the throne?! Fifteen years! Does that tell you anything about David's heart?

One commentator makes this important observation about David's character during this prolonged intimidation from Saul.

"It is noteworthy that in the desultory warfare which for several years ensued between the king and David, the latter never employed any weapon but flight."71

David fled from his adversary! Would you have responded the same way if you had been in David's situation? Indeed, Scripture gives us the brief, though breathlessly tender, experience of seeing David's heart through God's eyes in 1 Samuel 24:4,5. In this scene, David has full advantage over the deranged Saul; he has found the king who has hounded him unmercifully for many years—asleep in a cave! David's men want the king-elect to kill Saul, and even try to persuade David that such action is in accord with God's permissive will.

David, however, seeks only to humiliate Saul by cutting off the bottom of his robe as he sleeps. We read in the next verse that even this small act of humiliation performed against Saul deeply wounded (smote) David's
heart. He sorely regreted having touched "the Lord's anointed", whether by injury or insult!

"And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed..."

---1 Samuel 24:5,6

Without question, David learned many things during these difficult fugitive years which made him more fit to be the servant of the King of heaven. We quote Alexander Maclaren.

"(These years) deepened (David's) unconditional dependence on God. By the alternations of heat and cold, fear and hope, danger and safety, it tempered his soul and made it flexible, tough and bright as steel. It evolved the qualities of a leader of men: teaching him command and forbearance, promptitude and patience, valor and gentleness..."72

David did not usurp the throne from Saul for one vital reason. He knew God would move him in when God was ready. This trust in Jehovah, and this dependence on Jehovah's timing is indespensible in a theocratic operation. This heart attitude was the thing that made David Israel's most glorious king. Earl McQuay touches upon the hallmark of David's reign with this precious observa-
In the above quote, McQuay has given a simple, yet sublime, definition of theocratic leadership! This is the kind of man Israel needs on the throne if the nation is to be exalted. We have already noted that Israel could not ascend to her greatest heights with no king in the land (the period of the judges), nor with a lunatic king (Saul) trying to fulfill the office of God's holy calling. Our next venture is to see how David actually functioned in the role of theocratic king.

Saul's degrading death, recorded in 1 Samuel 31:1-9, left Israel's throne empty, and gave David the opportunity to legally assume the reins of government. But 2 Samuel 2 shows us that David did not allow his men to whisk him into royal robes. Though he was rightful heir to the throne, the man after God's own heart waited for a word from Jehovah. David hesitated to ascend the throne without first seeking Jehovah's permission! Mind you, in 2 Samuel 2:1, we learn that there is no king in the land, yet we
find David asking the Lord whether or not he should go up to the cities to be made king! Do you realize how incredible this action is for an heir-apparent to the throne?!

Samuel Dodds comments:

"The commendation of David that he was a man after God's own heart has specific reference to his administration of the government. It was widely known in the nation that he was God's choice to succeed Saul and yet he calmly waits the development of the divine plan. A human verdict would justify the persecuted David had he plunged the nation into civil war and waded to the throne through the blood of the royal family. Not until the death of Saul did he make any effort to secure what was his by divine appointment. His conduct in this matter must have grown out of a true conception of God's relation to the nation and the relation of the king to God and to the nation."74

This attitude of dependence upon God characterized the whole of David's administration, as G. Campbell Morgan testifies below:

"Whatever we may think about David--and no one is blind to his failure--in the matter of the Kingship of God, he ever recognized it. That was supremely characteristic of David and his reign....Follow it, watch it; there is not a single sentence or act in which he either ignores or forgets the Kingship of God."75

And so it was that Jehovah told David to go up
to Hebron, where he was made king over the house of Judah and where he reigned for seven-and-a-half years. *Note here that David controls only a partial kingdom*; the kingdom of Israel paid allegiance to Saul's son, Ishbosheth. Scripture, in fact, tells us that there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David (2 Samuel 3:1). We can conclude from this report that although David was on the throne, the great theocracy promised by God was not yet a reality.

But, ah, we read in 2 Samuel 5 that *all the tribes of Israel* come to Hebron after Ishbosheth is slain...to seek David, their king. And look at the intimate greeting they give to him!

"Then came all the tribes of Israel to David...saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh."

--2 Samuel 5:1

Matthew Henry observes here that Israel not only acknowledges David as one of them (i.e. he is not a stranger), but the tribes happily vow, "We are thine." This intimate bond ought to remind the reader that God's goal for earth involves what?

**GOD'S GLORY WILL BE MANIFESTED ON EARTH THROUGH A PEOPLE WHO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**
Henry lists some of the reasons why Israel came to David, beseeching him to take upon him the government, but he suggests the "the divine appointment was the greatest inducement of all."77 In other words, the people knew that David was God's choice for the throne!

"So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel."

—2 Samuel 5:3

Dear friends, the coronation of David marks the institution of the great theocratic state which God had promised through Abraham's seed! As Rudolf Kittel observes:

"Under David's leadership, 'all the tribes of Israel' came forward. The national kingdom, the national state became a reality, for all who considered themselves a part of Israel voluntarily came under David's scepter...David's reputation was so good that, for the sake of union under him, all disagreement and dissension among the tribes disappeared...A great deed thus had been accomplished, such as never before had been seen in Israel."78

Indeed, 2 Samuel 5:10 leaves no doubt as to David's
divine anointing!

"And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him."

To be sure, David knew his reign marked the beginning of that great theocratic state that would turn all eyes to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

"And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel."

---2 Samuel 5:12

We will soon take a look at the great nation established during David's reign, but it behooves us to first look at two glimpses of David's life that show him to be a man whose obedience was in company with the passions of God. The first incident is recorded in 2 Samuel 5:17ff.

HANDLING ENEMY ATTACKS

In 2 Samuel 5:17, we read that the Philistines were not too happy with the news of David's anointing, and they promptly set out to get him! Surely, they still remembered the day when David, a mere lad, brought down their "invincible..."
cible" champion with a stone, and they didn't want any repeat performances. Scripture says the Philistines spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim (verse 18). Stated another way, they practically camped on David's doorstep!

Now what would you do if your worst enemy paid you such a visit? What would our governmental leaders do if Soviet troops set out from Cuba with the intention of "spreading" themselves in Florida? Do you think our military advisers would debate whether or not to mobilize our own troops? Certainly not!

With that in mind, consider David's response. The Philistine army has come up against him, and instead of calling out his own army, he elects to talk the situation over! His inquiry is incredible in view of the fact that an entire army is at his doorstep. David's question is this: "Should I fight these guys?"! No...in actuality, David's inquiry is addressed to the Lord: "Lord, do You want me to fight against these Philistines? And will You give me victory over them when I do?" (2 Samuel 5:19)

Remember G. Campbell Morgan's comment that there is not a single sentence or act in which David either ignores or forgets the kingship of God? The above is proof of that statement! A king is a military leader, just as the President of the United States serves as Commander-in-chief of the armed forces. David had the authority to wage war against the Philistines, and yet, because he is careful about the kingship of God, he first seeks permission from the more superior Captain!

Jehovah's response to David's inquiry is positive
on both counts: yes, David is to go up against the Philis-
tines, and, yes, God will give David victory. And this,
dear friends, is a theocratic operation.

But watch now what happens when the Philistines
regroup after David's initial attack and plan a second
assault upon him. He has already been given permission
by Jehovah to smite the Philistines, correct? We would
expect, then, to read that David charged into their camp
again, but no. Instead, we find David seeking Divine
Direction in this new situation! He does not pre-
sume that God is predictable ("He will tell me the same
thing as before, so why ask?"); nor bound (limited) to
working the same way in every situation.

As it turns out, God does offer a different battle
strategy the second time around. Rather than a front-line
assault, God instructs David and his men to take the
Philistines by ambush (2 Samuel 5:22-25). How this
incident teaches us not to second-guess the ways of God!

Well, then, what is the outworking of a committed
heart like David's? Scripture says that wherever David
went, God gave him victory. That is, God won the battles
through David (2 Samuel 8:6,14). As a result, David's
administration was characterized by justice and righteous-
ness (2 Samuel 8:15). Do you see how these two facets
relate to God's ultimate goal? David not only saw to it
that his people were duly protected (justice); his govern-
ment also served as an internal guard against idolatry,
immorality and injustice (righteousness).

A RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE BRING GLORY TO GOD.
The second incident recorded in Scripture which shows us the measure of David's inner man is found in 2 Samuel 7. It is here that David expresses his desire to build a temple that will honor God. As G. Campbell Morgan observes:

"David considered (v.2) the stateliness of his own habitation (I dwell in a house of cedar), and compared with that the meanness of the habitation of the ark (the ark dwells within curtains), and thought this incongruous that he should dwell in a palace and the ark in a tent." 79

The reader should note that Nathan the prophet (a man of spiritual discernment) thought well of David's request and, without conferring with God, told David to go ahead with his plans (v.3).

Again we see, as in the case of Samuel's certainty that Eliab was God's choice to succeed Saul, that men endowed with spiritual sensitivity are not always attuned to God's desires! The Lord cancelled both David's proposal and Nathan's blessing the very same day they were uttered. (See 2 Samuel 7:4-7 for the reason behind God's action).
God did not discount David's request, however. In fact, Jehovah offers to build David a house (a perpetual household, a dynasty!), and assures him that one of his own children will fulfill David's desire to build God a majestic dwelling (2 Samuel 7:11-13).

And, if that blessing were not beyond what David could ask or think, God promises him that his throne shall be forever—that the "seed of his own bowels" would ever sit enthroned in Israel. This staggering, yet precious, contract between Jehovah and David (and David's seed) is known as "The Davidic Covenant".

According to Ellicott's Bible Commentary, this covenant is rooted in the Abrahamic Promise:
"...David is now made the head of the line in which shall be fulfilled the primeval promise originally given simply to the human race (Gen. 3:15); then restricted to the nation descended from Abraham (Gen. 22:18, etc.); then limited to the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10; comp. Ezek. 21:27); and now to be fulfilled in the family of David."80

Does this offer of a perpetual throne sound familiar? It should. Such was the essence of God's promise to Saul, remember? But God makes His promise to David more sure. Saul tragically lost the eternal kingdom through his own repeated rebellion and disobedience. Not only was he dethroned for his sin, but his entire family line was utterly cut off from ever being heirs.

Not so with David. God promises never to cut off his seed—even if that seed acts wickedly. That is, should David's descendants sin, God vows not to reject them, as He did Saul, but to chasten and correct them (2 Samuel 7:14-15). As Merrill Unger notes:

"This regal covenant had only one condition—chastisement for disobedience in the kingly Davidic line. The covenant, however, was not to be abrogated...but was to be 'established forever'."81

Another aspect of the Davidic Covenant pertains to David's son, Solomon, who was to bring great peace and prosperity to Israel. We cannot even begin to fathom
the glory of the nation Israel until we look at the reign of Solomon. If Israel's hour of glory began with the anointing of David, it glows with exceeding brightness under King Solomon. To be sure, the building of a great theocratic nation culminates in the blessed tranquility, excellence, prosperity and romance which characterize Solomon's reign.

We turn now to witness the glorious climax of God's promise to Abraham!

THE THEOCRACY UNDER SOLOMON

As we have suggested above, one cannot comprehend the full glory of God's theocratic nation unless one looks at the reigns of David and Solomon together. That is because the kingdom is so glorious, God cannot show it in one picture. David and Solomon are like the front and back of a coin; both sides must be viewed before you have the full picture, the complete view.

David's reign was characterized by war and, because God was with him wherever he went, victory. He was considered the national ideal, not only because he won the allegiance of a divided Israel, but because He strengthened Israel's army to utterly crush every Canaanite stronghold. Unlike the days in which the judges ruled, David brought
a standard of justice and righteousness to the land. And, most important of all, his reverence for the Kingship of God allowed the people to experience the incomparable success of theocratic rule.

But what about Solomon? What kind of a man was he? We know from Scripture that David was a man after God's own heart, but what about his son? 1 Kings 3:3 gives us a look at Solomon's heart and, to be sure, the first four words sound themselves like a psalm!

"NOW SOLOMON LOVED JEHOVAH..."

Indeed, as one studies Solomon's relationship to God, one soon discovers in him that same precious humility that endeared David to the Shepherd-heart of God. For you see, Solomon does not exalt himself when David's throne passes to him. In fact, he pleads his incapability to rule so great a people!

"And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude."

--1 Kings 3:7,8
Do you know what Solomon is saying above? He is saying, "Lord, You have chosen me to rule over Your people, but...I can't do it." Do you think God will be able to work through a man such as Solomon? Contrast Solomon's attitude with that of Adonijah, another of David's sons who tried to usurp the kingdom from the man of God's choice.

Rather than fearing the awesome responsibility, we are told in 1 Kings 1:5 that:

"Adonijah...exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him."

Adonijah certainly was not the man God wanted. Such self-exaltation is the complete opposite of a perfect heart. God can only work through a committed and obedient person.

We noted above that Solomon said, "Lord, this responsibility is too great for me; I can't do it." But Solomon wasn't turning tail. He knew that God was his Helper, and so he asks the most tender and honorable favor ever spoken by royal blood.

"Give thy servant an understanding.

--1 Kings 3:9

Solomon asked God to give him a perfect heart with which to shepherd God's people! And, look, what God gave
Solomon ("Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart") made his reign qualitatively different from David's. Consider 1 Kings 3:28 in this light.

"And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."

David's kingdom was characterized by victory, but Solomon's kingdom is characterized by...the wisdom of God! And, look, this is not just spiritual wisdom, dear friends; we cannot even fathom the insight, the illumination, the breadth of knowledge granted to Solomon because of his selfless request!

For example, Scripture says that Solomon spoke over 3,000 proverbs. Do you know what a proverb is? A proverb is a portable expression of wisdom. How many people in the future will be toting and quoting the words you speak today?

Again, we need to remind ourselves that "the wisdom asked for was given in large measure, and took a varied range. The wide world of nature, animate and inanimate, the lives and characters of men, lay before (Solomon), and he took cognizance of all."82

An abbreviated list, provided below, documents the testimony of Scripture which says, "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness
of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore... For he was wiser than all men." (1 Kings 4:29,31)

Scripture says that Solomon "spoke of trees, beasts, birds, insects, and fishes. The scientific name for these fields of study are given below. How many people do you know who could win an audience on such topics?

| TREES = BOTANY | BEASTS = ZOOLOGY | BIRDS = ORNITHOLOGY | INSECTS = ENTOMOLOGY | FISHES = ICHTHYOLOGY |

In addition to writing proverbs, Solomon was also the author of some 5,000 songs! Do you know how many songs are contained in an average hymn book? Between 300 and 500. Taking the latter figure, we would have to make room for 10 books if we kept all of Solomon's music in the book racks on our church pews!

Solomon's kingdom was great in other respects besides the above-mentioned facets. Look at 1 Kings 4:25.

"And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon."

If men are dwelling safely, what does that mean? It means THERE IS NO WAR! Remember David's reign? It
was marked by both internal and external strife. David was truly a king who went forth to battle (2 Samuel 11:1), but who can name Solomon's enemies or retell his military campaigns? Solomon's own personal testimony in 1 Kings 5:4 is this:

"But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurent."

Not only had wars ceased in Solomon's kingdom, but there was PEACE—everywhere! Have you ever read the Psalms? What was David's repeated cry? "Lord, I'm surrounded...being chased...waters are come in unto my soul." Do you see now why we said David and Solomon's kingdoms were like viewing opposite sides of a coin?

Not only was Solomon's kingdom distinguished by the wisdom of God, by the absence of wars, and by peace—it was also noted for its LUXURIANCE. Let us ask here if you have ever longed for the day when you shall walk on streets of pure gold? Do you think Scripture talks of such streets just because gold has aesthetic beauty?

Or might Scripture be trying to communicate to us that what we esteem costly and scarce will be as nothing in heaven because of the unlimited supply? With that thought in mind, consider 1 Kings 10:21 and what it tells us about Solomon's reign.
"And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon."

Because of the sophistication of the King James English, we lose something in the translation. What the writer is trying to say is simply this: "Gold was no big deal in Solomon's days, because there was so much of it. Why use silver, a 'cheaper' metal, when you can go gold all the way?"

Gold and silver are our most coveted metals today, but look at the rating men gave to silver in Solomon's day!

"And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones."

--1 Kings 10:27

When we consider all of this, we are moved by the glory of Solomon's throne. As William Smith comments in his Bible Dictionary:

"The position to which (Solomon) succeeded was unique. Never before, and never after, did the kingdom of Israel take its place among the great monarchies of the East."
Would you agree at this point that Solomon's kingdom was truly "a great nation"? Scripture gives even the skeptic an opportunity to consider the hand of God in this incredible goal. The queen of Sheba had heard reports of the exceeding wealth of Solomon's kingdom, and his marvelous wisdom, but she considered the accounts as gross exaggerations...until she visited Solomon and saw for herself!

The fact that she had heard reports in her own land indicate that people were talking—but do you realize that of all the reports that were obviously circulating at that time, Scripture only quotes one person verbatim: a skeptic! We don't know for sure what the others were saying, or how deeply impressed they were with Solomon's empire. But we do know that the queen fainted inwardly ("there was no more spirit in her"—1 Kings 10:5), and confessed to Solomon:

"Behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."

But, ah, friends, does all this—the impressive achievements of Solomon's reign—bring us any nearer to God's ultimate goal? We have peace and unity and righteousness, to be sure. And we have people! A great people, that cannot be numbered for multitude, according to 1 Kings 3:8! But what about God's glory filling the earth? Do we have that?

Lest we get caught up only in the majesty and
materialism of Solomon's reign, let us not forget that God is in the business of drawing men to Himself. And Solomon played a strategic part in that eternal longing. Remember David's request, to build a house for God? Was not Solomon God's choice for this resplendent, yet holy, task? Do you know how important the Temple is to the fulfillment of Jehovah's core desire?

Look at 1 Kings 8, where Solomon dedicates the Temple. What happens here that is crucial to God's plan for Earth? We are told in verse 6 that the priests went into the holy place to secure the ark of the covenant. The historian is quick to verify that "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb." After the priests departed, however, something else was present in the holy of holies that was so terrible in glory that the priests could no longer stand in the house to minister! Verse 11 gives the incredible explanation of this event:

"THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAD FILLED THE HOUSE OF THE LORD"!

Jehovah, who dwells in unapproachable light, whose radiance is blinding, whose holiness is like a devouring fire, whose power is formidable, whose Name resounds in the highest heavens--this same Jehovah had come into the Temple, to dwell forever with His people! The glory of God--exceeding, awesome, divine--had come to dwell on Earth permanently!
The Temple

And the Lord said unto (Solomon)... I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my Name there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually."

--1 Kings 9:3

Remember what God told Moses in Numbers 14:21?

"AS TRULY AS I LIVE, ALL THE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH THE GLORY OF THE LORD."

Do you see how strategic, how indispensable, the Temple is to the accomplishment of this goal? How can men be righteous--filled with God's character--apart from the salvation of the Lord? In Solomon's dedication prayer, he demonstrates how intrinsic the Temple is to the life of God's people, and to the whole world!

* "Lord, when we want to pray to You, let us turn toward this place (=the Temple).

* "Lord, when we need Thy judgments, let us turn to this place."

* "Lord, when the enemy prevails, let us confess our sins and turn toward this place for help."
* "Lord, when there is drought because of our sin, let us turn to this place for Your forgiveness."

* "Lord, if anything sets us back—whether famine, or pestilence, or mildew or locust—let us turn toward this place for Your mercy."

* "Lord, when one man, or Israel corporately, seeks Thy pardon, may You hear from this place and judge the heart in grace."

* "Lord, when a stranger wants to know Thee, let him come to this, Thy house, and find favor and blessing."

* "Lord, if Thy people go out to battle, may they turn towards this place and know You will maintain their cause."

* "Lord, if Thy people sin against Thee, and are delivered into the hands of the enemy and made captives in another land, may they turn towards this place, and make supplication to Thee, and mayest Thou bring them home again."

Do you see the overriding theme of these requests, gleaned from 1 Kings 9:29-52? Not only is Jehovah in this house, but forgiveness of sins is here!

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THE TEMPLE =

THE ONLY PLACE ON EARTH WHERE MEN COULD MEET GOD!

THE ONLY PLACE WHERE MEN COULD FIND FORGIVENESS OF SINS (SALVATION).
Dear friends, is anything lacking here? Has God not done as He promised? Do we not have here a great nation, a channel of salvation for all the earth? Is not the Nation of Israel under David and Solomon’s reigns a scale model of the Great Goal? It sure seems to be!

Do you know what we have in this miniature model of God’s ultimate goal? We have salvation in the context of a nation! God is redeeming people; He is saving men! This is a redemptive plan! Israel is a great nation because:

**ISRAEL IS THE ONLY REDEMPTIVE OPERATION ON THIS EARTH!**

Do you see now why God did not begin His redemptive program by building a church, or by raising up a great evangelist? How has His fame penetrated the heathen nations? Has it not been through Israel, and the demonstrations of Divine Power that have accompanied her growth? Moreover, if God’s glory is to fill all the earth, with whom or what will He be dealing with? He will be dealing with the **nations** (peoples), and so He has raised up a mediator nation (Israel) to reach all the others!
Is God's glory to be only in Jerusalem? Oh, no, dear friends. God's glory is to be over all the earth! The building of the nation (Genesis 12:1 through 1 Kings 10) is not the completion of the Goal. Israel, for all its glory under David and Solomon, does not achieve God's ends in toto.

But, surely, what we have tasted here is a short sip of that wine that will be even better at the end!

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(The reader is here challenged to review the 11 Steps involved in the building of a great nation. The symbolic representation of the various steps is given on the following page; see if you can identify each step by describing what is happening in each scene. The correct answers follow.)
THE BUILDING OF A GREAT NATION: 11 STEPS

Test yourself by writing under each symbolic block what is happening there. This is the building of a nation at a summary glance. If you cannot identify the steps, please search out the text before turning to the answer sheet.

22. ibid.


28. ibid., p. 163.

29. ibid., p. 163

30. Saphir, p. 190.

31. Moseley, p. 36.


35. ibid.

36. ibid., p. 241.


38. ibid., pp. 136-137.


41. Ellicott, p. 221.

42. Henry, p. 275.
43 Ellicott, p. 143.

44 Unger, p. 186.


46 Henry, p. 282.


49 Bryant, p. 521.

50 Morgan, p. 120.


53 Guthrie and Motyer, p. 254.

54 Henry, p. 292.

55 Wood, p. 382.

56 Erdman, p. 88.

57 Wood, p. 396.


59 Davies, p. 424.

60 Press, p. 1800.

61 ibid.

62 ibid.

63 Henry, p. 296.

64 Unger, p. 189.


67Ibid.

68Ibid.


70Ibid.


75Morgan, p. 132.

76Henry, p. 331.

77Ibid.


79Morgan, p. 335.

80Ellicott, p. 269.

81Unger, p. 203.

82Smith, p. 657.

83Ibid, p. 655.