

# Faithbuilders Fellowship

Proclaiming Christ's Parousia  
and the coming Millennial Kingdom  
January, February 2008

## The Great Company

*"The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide ... he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:13-15).*

This well known exhortation of the Apostle Paul shows the importance of attention to our Christian life. The foundation for us all is Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). But much depends on how we build on that foundation through our life as Christians. "Let every man take heed how he builds thereon" (1 Corinthians 3:10).

### **Lessons from Another Building**

Soon after the close of seventy years for Babylon, God moved Cyrus to free the Jews. Tens of thousands returned to rebuild their homeland. But by the time of Nehemiah, 95 years after Babylon's term of power, the task was still incomplete.

The temple had been completed seventy years earlier, under Zerubbabel (governor) and Joshua (priest). Ezra came to Jerusalem 57 years later with another wave of enthusiasm and energy. The temple had been refurbished and the foundation of the walls relaid. But their enemies opposed them, the work languished, and still, 13 years later, the walls of the city were in ruins.<sup>1</sup>

When Nehemiah heard the sad report, he prayed and God answered. Nehemiah was appointed by Artaxerxes to complete Jerusalem. When Nehemiah arrived, he privately surveyed the task. Then he organized the people and stirred them for the work. To motivate them, he assigned each workman that part of the wall nearest to their own homes.

So with our work building Spiritual Jerusalem. We cooperate in spirit with all who are in Christ, to complete "New Jerusalem," to become a city of blessing for the world in the Millennium (Revelation 21:17-24). The foundation has been laid and our part is to build upon it. Like Nehemiah, we should pause to reflect upon how to proceed in building our Christian life. Then each should

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attend to the building he is involved in — specially that which is closest to himself, namely his own character.

### **Reflecting Upon our Task**

First of all comes devotion to our task. Are we willing to commit ourselves to the Christian life and its work? If we have faith in Christ, appreciate what he did for us, and fellowship with others regularly, we do well. Next, let us be sure we have committed our life in this direction. The term "consecration" refers to this commitment. Following consecration to God, water baptism is appropriate as a symbol of this decision. Then we set about to the Christian life. What do we do first?

Notice what Nehemiah did first. He took stock of the situation privately, for three days, determining a course of action. Notice what Jesus did first, after his baptism. He retreated to the wilderness for 40 days to meditate upon his mission. So after we have committed ourself to the Christian life, it is good to explore the specifics of how we will carry this out.

There are three parts to the Christian life — Character, Study, Service. If we attend to all three, we will be stable, balanced, secure. As Peter said, "brethren, give diligence ... for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10).

**Character** is not *merely* an inward development, for it expresses itself in our outward conduct and deportment. Inwardly we should attain peace of heart, contentment with what we have, and a kind disposition toward others. Even if we have enemies, we can think kindly of them. We can think of how they will be as changed men or women, when they yield to friendly discipline during the

Millennium. Meanwhile we can be kind to all around us, respectful of authority, respectful of one another, faithful to our duties, sweet tempered, thoughtful, approachable.



The apostle James — not the brother of John, who was martyred early, but the other James, brother of Jude — was a pastoral leader in the Church. To him was given the oversight of the Church at Jerusalem. It was he that chaired the council at Jerusalem when the apostles and elders assembled in about 51 AD to discuss

how to advise the Gentile converts coming into Christ. James was a man of piety, known for his prayer and godliness. We have but one epistle from James, but it carries a good amount of practical advice respecting character and conduct, drawn from years of experience as a general overseer of the thousands of saints in Jerusalem.

Here is what James advises us. If we have many trials, receive them with joy, for trials develop patience and this brings maturity. Pray for wisdom and cultivate it. Do not hesitate to pray for rich spiritual graces, which accrue through experience. If we are poor, think of your immeasurably rich calling — we are heirs of God himself. You are blessed if you endure. Be doers of the word — slow to speak, swift to hear, slow to anger. Bridle your tongue. Keep unspotted from the world. Care for others. Treat them without regard for their high or low status. Show your faith by your works. If you are wise, express this by good works, meekly. Sow peace. Pray only for spiritual things. Submit to God, but resist the devil. Be clean, single-minded, humble, and speak well of others. Then, in rapid succession, James says to be chaste, peaceable, gentle, agreeable, Christlike.

**Study** involves coming to know the plans of God. These are revealed in the Scriptures, so we should become familiar with the Bible and its contents. We do this by reading the holy Scriptures, and hearing them read. We should possess a Bible. If we do not possess a Bible, we should acquire one. They are available for purchase everywhere, even in poor countries. If we haven't sufficient funds for this, then let us save some little that comes our way, week by week. The effort to do this will seal our appreciation of the Bible that we sacrifice for.

Then, come to know the Plan of God in detail. Study the truth literature Bible Students everywhere distribute freely. Understand the Chart of the Ages. Ask questions. Mature in understanding. Become established in the foundation truths quickly, then progress to deeper points — types, shadows, prophecies, time periods. It was the privilege of Bro. Russell to assemble the threads of Truth from various sources, and weave them into the Plan of the Ages, which is the foundation for Bible Students everywhere. Read the volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, in which the Truth is explained and elucidated.

**Service** is the third leg of Christian development. As we grow in character and understanding, we should actively serve the Truth. We can explain the Truth to others, share Truth materials with them, encourage them to acquire a Bible, study it, and regularly attend meetings. Help organize Truth meetings and conventions. Witness to others about the Plan of the Ages and the coming Kingdom. Contribute our abilities for the spiritual welfare of others.

If we are friendly, influence people toward the Truth. If we are studious, engage the minds of others in the Truth. If we are good at explaining, explain some lovely part of the Truth to others. If we are good at organization, use this talent for the brethren. If we are married, encourage your spouse in good ways. Train your children with discipline, instilling in them faith and respect for godly things.

Active service may involve both denying ourselves other enjoyable activities, and accepting burdens to serve others. Jesus advised us to embrace both of these. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

### ***Building on the Foundation***

By these means, we build our edifice of faith, works, character, on the foundation of Christ. If we build well, there will be a corresponding reward. If we build as the scriptures tell us to, then we are building with "gold, silver, and precious stones," metaphorically. But if in our consecrated life we neglect these values, then Paul says we are building with "wood, hay, stubble" — earthly things (1 Corinthians 3:12).

The trials of life act partly as tests on what we have built. If our building is spiritual, and we abide the tests, we "shall receive a reward" — we will become part of the bride of Christ, in heavenly glory.

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## ***The Great Company Class***

But what if we do not build this way? What if we are slack, and year by year we allow the spirit of the world to direct our thoughts, words, time, activities, and fail to mature spiritually? This is where the title of our subject comes into focus. The Great Company Class, as Bible Students express it, is composed of those Christians who do not suitably apply themselves to their Christian life. Six passages of scripture speak of this class, which we will discuss briefly.

### **(1) *Corinthians***

First, the passage in Corinthians which heads this article. Paul says those who build with wood, hay, stubble, will suffer loss. He does not mean a loss of life, for “he himself shall be saved” through the purgative experiences of trial. Yes, life — even spiritual life in heaven — will be received by such a Christian. So what is the loss? It is a loss of the earthly, perishable things he builds while not focussed on spiritual values. Also, he or she suffers the loss of being part of the elect “Bride” of Christ in heavenly glory. Thus the Apostle John warns us to “look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (2 John verse 8). The Apostle Jude speaks of these as Christians with “spotted garments” (Jude verse 23).

### **(2) *Revelation 7:9-17***

The first eight verses of Revelation chapter seven speak of the elect Bride class as 144,000 spiritual Israelites. (In Revelation, “Jews” are symbolic of Christians, as in Revelation 2:9, 3:9). They are “sealed” before the four winds of trouble are unleashed, which closes this age. So the elect class, which becomes the Bride of Christ, is complete before the great tribulation represented by the “four winds.”

But then Revelation 7:9,10 introduce another class, a different class. They are described as a “great multitude.” Of course they are only a small fraction of the world, but they are “great” in number compared to the elect Bride class.

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” So, who are these? When the Apostle John saw these in the vision, he was unsure who they represented.

Before coming to the answer in verse 14, let us think about this question a bit. Who are these? The white robes and palm branches represent that these are overcomers of some sort, but a vastly larger number than the Bride class mentioned earlier. This class is not composed of the entire world, for verse nine, properly rendered, says they are “out of” (Greek, *ek*) all nations. So they are

a redeemed class, larger than the Bride class, they appear at the close of the Gospel Age, but before the world is saved in the Millennial Kingdom.

This is the class Paul spoke about in Corinthians. They are Christians who failed to build properly. They are not lost, they are saved, they do receive life. They do overcome, but they fail of the chief prize. Bible Students call them the “Great Company,” a term which derives from their description as a “great multitude” in verse nine.

Now to the description of them by the angel who speaks to John. Verses 14 — “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Remember the description in Jude of Christians with garments “spotted by the flesh”? And the intimation in John about those who fail to receive a “full reward”? This is that class. Unlike the elect Bride class, these do not escape the great tribulation closing this age. Instead, this class is allowed to pass through it, and benefit from the purging which that experience allows.<sup>2</sup>

Verse 15 says “They are **before** the throne of God,” whereas the promise to the Bride class it to be enthroned with Christ, as he is with God (Revelation 3:21). Verse 15 also says they serve God “day and night **in his temple**.” The temple of God is in the spirit realm. This Great Company class will be in heaven, resurrected as spirit beings. But rather than be part of the distinguished Bride of Christ, they will be given a lesser — but still very honorable — service toward God in heaven.

The remainder of verse 15, through verse 17, describes the blessings God will grant these “tribulation saints.” “He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat [so as to bring discomfort]. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

This is symbolism still. Heaven is not a physical realm with literal water, literal food, literal heat or sun or physical hunger — any more than God is a physical being with white hair, as depicted in the Old Testament prophecy of Daniel. These are all symbols expressed in terms that we can identify with. They show that God will grant these Christians — even though slack in the present — a pleasant, comfortable, wondrous life in heaven, where their service to God will be an honorable privilege.

### **(3) *Song of Solomon***

A contrast between these two classes (the Bride, and the Great Company), is shown also in the Song of Solomon. This book speaks of two parties, Solomon the “beloved,” and a young woman his “love” who is the object of his affection. These represent Jesus and his Bride class. But there is a test upon the young woman, thrice

repeated in the book. Will her love for her king suffice to enliven her to awake to his leading, or will she listlessly neglect her privilege?



Here are the words of that test, cited from the NAS version, in the three instances where it appears. “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, that you will **not arouse or awaken my love, until she pleases**” (Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5, 8:4).

In chapter three of that book, and in chapter five of that book, we have the two possible responses of the young woman illustrated. In both chapters the young woman is upon her bed at night. But her love for her lord leads to very different conduct. In chapter three, we find this. “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.” So the saints, during the night time of waiting for Christ’s return, seek him in their thoughts. At last she concludes, “I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad way I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.” So the faithful have sought Jesus earnestly, looking for every sign of his promised *parousia*, or presence, at the close of the age.

Verse three — “The watchmen that go about the city [the leaders of Christendom] found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? But from this quarter this is little help. Verse four — “It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth, I held him, and would not let him go.” There are deep prophetic lessons here about how the Church, as the end of the age approached, sought every prophetic sign of Christ’s coming. How the Adventist movement traced these signs, and even though disappointed, persevered, until at last the second presence of Christ was perceived at the close of the 1335 days of Daniel 12:12. But here, we wish merely to note the fervent spirit of this “Bride to be” class, and her success at last of being with her heavenly bridegroom.

Now contrast that to the episode in chapter five, beginning with verse two. “I sleep, but my heart waketh.” Here also the woman is upon her bed at night. But no hint here of rising to search for her beloved. Instead, he approaches. “It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” What an endearing plea! Thus is represented the call of our master to us at his return, to come forth from the creed beds in the house of

Christendom, and rise to see the greater blessing of Truth attending the presence of Christ during the present harvest time.

But the response? Here, in chapter five, it is lacking. Here is exemplified not the spirit of the Bride class, but the spirit of the Great Company class. “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” (verse three). Yes, it means some discomfort to rise from our comfortable surroundings, respond to our master’s voice, come forth from the churches of Christendom, and follow our master, through the voice of Truth, where he beckons us. A great number do not take the trouble to do this.

But there are further appeals. “My beloved extended his hand through the opening, And my feelings were aroused for him” (verse 4, New American Standard). At last she is moved to respond ... but too late for the triumph which might have been hers. “I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock” — all emblems of her affection. Yes, the Great Company class loves their Lord, Jesus. If only the discomforts of the Christian way were less, she might have responded more timely. But now, only disappointment. “I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer” (verse 6).

The passage continues, describing two other encounters, which have prophetic meaning — the keepers of Christendom now treat her unkindly, in this period of Great Tribulation through which she must pass. Then she comes to the “daughters of Jerusalem,” and describes her Lord in such glowing terms that even they are moved to seek him also. So Israel in her distress will also be moved to seek their Messiah.

So the daughters of Jerusalem respond, “Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee” (chapter 6:1). Surprisingly, the young woman seems to know where he is. And she recognizes her loss at not being there with him. “My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies” (verse 2). The “garden” in the Song of Solomon is a metaphor for the bed of love. In other words, he is with his bride ... but this young woman is not there. The Great Company fails to become of the Bride class.



Yes, all Christians love Jesus. “Yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend” (Song of Solomon 5:16). But the test upon us is zeal, devotion, and affection suitable to prompt us to action. Shall we put on the garments of praise, and interweave the fruits of the Spirit, through a devoted life? Or shall we neglect the privilege, and draw back?

The contrast between the Bride Class, and the Great Company class, is illustrated once more in the Song of Solomon in the closing chapter, verses 8-10. The Bride is represented as fully developed in all the attractive features her beloved with appreciate, representing the fruits of the Spirit we develop in the present life. But she has “a little sister,” described as undeveloped. What shall be her lot? She will not be the bride of the beloved. Nevertheless, she will be attended with “silver” (spirit nature), and “boards of cedar” (everlasting life). But of the Bride class, “I was in his eyes as one that found favour” (verse 10).

#### **(4) Ezekiel 44:10-14**

The closing nine chapters of Ezekiel are a picture of the Millennial Kingdom so close at hand. In Chapter 47 of that chapter we have a picture of the stream of life from the temple, refreshing the dead world as fresh water might revive the Dead Sea. There are the trees of life on either side of the river, just as Revelation 22:1-3 depicts the Millennium.

In chapter 44, the prophet describes, in symbol, the classes which will operate during that Kingdom for the uplift of the world, the “people of the land” (Ezekiel 46:9). There will be a class of priests (Ezekiel 44:15). This represents the Bride class, who will be “priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

There will be a prince class, to lead the people. These are the Ancient Worthies, who will be raised as perfect human beings to lead the world during the Millennium. They are referred to as “princes in all the earth” in Psalms 45:6.<sup>3</sup>

And then there is another class, called from the priestly tribe, but not serving as priests. They are the Levites, a class devoted to God. But they had strayed from the right way. So they are chastened, recovered, and reclaimed as servants of God. They are given a secondary position of service, but still an honorable one. Like the priests, they serve God in the “sanctuary” — which like the “temple” in Revelation 7:15, represents the spirit realm. This is a picture of the Great Company class. They strayed from their commitment, but are reclaimed, purged, and given service in heaven, even though they fail to become the “priests” that “reign with him a thousand years.”

“The Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray ... they shall even bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary ... They shall

not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me ... But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof” (Ezekiel 44:10-14).

#### **(5) Psalms 107:17-21**

Psalms 107 speaks of four classes which the Lord delivers in his “lovingkindness.” The description of these four classes are segregated by this refrain — “Oh that men would praise Jehovah for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” It appears in verses 8, 15, 21, and 31. Each of these four instances is the penultimate (second to last) text in four passages which describe, respectively, the Bride class, Israel, the Great Company, and the World.

The Great Company class is treated in verses 17 through 21. “Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquity, are afflicted.” As in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25), here also the Great Company is described as foolish, for their failure to fully engage in the Christian life they have chosen. Verse 18 says they do not appreciate strong spiritual meat. Spiritually, they approach the gates of death. But they cry to God, who “saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”

The Great Company class is a mercy class. They withdraw from a full commitment to God, and might rightly be discarded, but in mercy God grants them a lesser service in the heavenly courts. They have good hearts, even if overcharged with the cares of this life.

#### **(6) Psalms 45:10-16**

This Psalm speaks of Christ Jesus. Paul applies it to Jesus in Hebrews 1:8. Psalms 45:10 addresses one called to be a Bride for this king. “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty ... The king’s daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.”

Those of the Bride class hear the calling, recognize its superiority to any other calling, leave their father (Adam’s) house, develop character within, put on divine hopes (represented by gold), and adorn themselves with needlework, representing the graces of the Spirit. But this bride has companions, who are not so favored. “The virgins her companions ... shall enter into the king’s palace” (verses 14, 15). Her companions go in with her into the spirit realm, into the palace of the great king, but they do not become the Bride. The Great Company class enters into the king’s palace in the spirit realm, even though they are not of the Bride.

#### **Others Also**

There are other pictures of the Great Company class, commonly considered as such in Bible Student circles.



Lot, called out of Sodom at the last moment before its destruction, depicts the Great Company parting company from the nominal Churches just before Armageddon (Genesis 19:17-25).

The Consecration of the Priesthood appears in Leviticus chapter eight, representing the consecration of the Church, the Bride class. In Numbers chapter eight, appears the consecration of the Levites to assist the priesthood. This represents the Great Company class, ordained to assist the Church during the Millennium.

Let us, who are Christians, first consecrate ourselves to God in sincere prayer. By this, let us decide once and for all that we are committed to God for our life. Then let us symbolize this decision by water baptism, not as a magical rite, but as a reminder to ourselves, and a witness to others, of our decision.

Then, let us build our life on the foundation of Christ. Like Nehemiah, let us approach the work thoughtfully, and proceed diligently. As we see sins spot our garments, let us cleanse them by asking forgiveness of God, through Christ. Then avoid the sin which does "so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1). Then "lay aside every weight ... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

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(1) We mention the periods of time here not merely as interesting figures from history. They may also confirm our expectations for the future. We understand that 6000 years from Adam close with the year 2043, which thus begins the Seventh Millennium, the Thousand Year Kingdom of Christ (Revelation 20:6). The seventy years during which Israel succumbed to Babylon, has a counterpart in the seventy years during which Israel regained their national independence in modern times. From the beginning of their return in 1878, to their statehood in 1948, was a period of seventy years. After Babylon's seventy years, Nehemiah completed the walls of Jerusalem 95 years later. From 1948, 95 years further take us to 2043, when we anticipate that the walls of spiritual Israel will be complete.

(2) Both the 144,000 class, and this "great multitude" class, are composed of Christians who live throughout the age, not merely at the end of the age. The prophetic picture in chapter seven "sees" those of these classes who live at the close of the age, and explains how each class is treated with respect to the "great tribulation" of the four winds. The faithful elect are spared these troubles, the less faithful class is purged by them. But neither class is limited to only those living at the close of the age.

(3) Notice that the prince class is not shown as entering the Sanctuary. They come to the east gate, commune there, but do not proceed inside (Ezekiel 44:3). So the Ancient Worthies will commune with the Church, and carry instructions back for the world. But as human leaders, they do not themselves go into the spirit realm.

## Six Generations

*Daniel's detailed prophecy of six generations of successors following Alexander the Great.*

Last issue's installment of this series was to resume at Daniel 11:5. The previous verses described Alexander the Great, his premature death, and the split of the empire into four parts — Macedonia, Thrace, Syria, and Egypt. Thus two centuries in advance, Daniel predicted that Greece would subdue Persia — and that, unlike with all the rulers of Babylon and Persia, after the first emperor of Greece the kingdom would divide into fragments. This kind of testimony, so specific and clear, is exceptional testimony of divine foreknowledge.

This kind of evidence increases as we advance through the prophecy of six generations of kings following Alexander. These were kings of Syria and Egypt, called respectively "King of the North" and "King of the South," from their positions relative to the land of Israel.

### First Generation

**Verse Five.** "And the king of the south shall be strong" (Daniel 11:5). Ptolemy in Egypt ruled the strongest and most wealthy of the four empires from the beginning. He commenced his rule in 323 BC, the year Alexander died, though he did not adopt the title "king"



for another 18 years, as a matter of political discretion. He was called **Ptolemy Soter** (savior). He had been one of Alexander's generals, one of his seven personal guards, and a friend since childhood. After securing power in Egypt, he extended his influence into the eastern coast of Libya, to Cyprus in the Mediterranean, Judea to the northeast, and even occupied Syria for a time. He was indeed "strong."

"... and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion" (Daniel 11:5, remainder). This refers to Seleucus, called **Seleucus Nicator** (conqueror). When offices were apportioned after the death of Alexander in 323 BC, Seleucus became chiliarch (commander of a thousand), and then governor of Syria. But five years later, in apprehension of Antigonus, he fled to Egypt and served under Ptolemy. Thus he became "one of his [Ptolemy's] princes." After Ptolemy's victory at the Battle of Gaza in 312 BC, Seleucus returned to Syria. That is considered the start of his rule. Then commenced the first year of the famous "Seleucid Era," which continued for hundreds of years.



The province of Syria was much larger than any other, extending from the Mediterranean to the border of India — “His dominion shall be a great dominion.” Thus Seleucus became greater than even his former mentor, Ptolemy — “he [Seleucus] shall be strong above him [Ptolemy].”

Thus, in so few words, precise and unusual events respecting these two monarchs are succinctly predicted. Note how unique the circumstances, and how specific the descriptions which match them. We will see this at each step of the way through this chapter. The precision, brevity, but specificity, combine to establish the meaning in a way wholly satisfying to the reflective student of the narrative. By this means God is pleased to reveal his foreknowledge to those who value the things of the Spirit sufficiently to investigate. Faith is established upon evidence. Here the evidence is most impressive.

### ***Successive Generations***

In order to follow the narrative, it helps to have a list of successive rulers on the two thrones, such as in the box at the bottom of this column. The name of each king is preceded by the number of years he ruled.

The last four rulers in Syria were two pairs of brothers. Each pair is included in one line, so that it is apparent that the record of this prophecy includes six generations of rulers in each kingdom. Other rulers followed, but they are not included in the prophecy. The prophecy takes us up to Antiochus Epiphanes, the infamous persecutor of the Jews, who is introduced in verse 21. He in turns becomes a prototype of the breaker of the Jewish people and persecutor of spiritual Israel, Pagan Rome — and on a deeper level the even greater persecutor of the saints, Papal Rome.

We will see this when we get to verse 31, which is a pivotal verse of the prophecy. That will be in a later issue. For now we merely mention the scope of this prophecy, so that the reader can get his bearings. Verses 6 through 20 take us from the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus to the time of Ptolemy Philometor, and in Syria through Seleucus Philopator.

### **Six Generations of Kings**

| Egypt (Start 323 BC)    | Syria (Start 312 BC)                            |
|-------------------------|---|
| 38 Ptolemy Soter        | 32 Seleucus Nicator                             |
| 38 Ptolemy Philadelphus | 19 Antiochus Soter                              |
| 25 Ptolemy Eugertes     | 15 Antiochus Theus                              |
| 17 Ptolemy Philopator   | 20 Seleucus Callinicus                          |
| 24 Ptolemy Epiphanes    | 3 Seleucus Ceraunus / 36 Antiochus Magnus       |
| 35 Ptolemy Philometor   | 11 Seleucus Philopator / 12 Antiochus Epiphanes |

### ***The Second Generation***

**Verse Six.** “And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king’s daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times” (Daniel 11:6).



We say “second generation,” but this actually takes us through the long reign of **Ptolemy Philadelphus** (left), which means in Syria we are to the third ruler, **Antiochus Theus** (below). “And in the end of years” suggests a number of years passed before coming to this episode of the

prophecy. In those years Ptolemy Philadelphus sponsored the translation of the Old Testament into Greek, which we know today as the Septuagint version. But this is passed over in the prophecy. The 19 years of **Antiochus Soter** (not shown here) are also passed over. He was half Persian (by his mother), and received the kingdom after others assassinated his elderly father. In his days occurred the “First Syrian War” between Egypt and Syria, which lasted three years beginning in 274 BC. In this Egypt ultimately retained control of Palestine. Then, a year after Antiochus Theus ascended the throne, began the “Second Syrian War.” This lasted seven years, and was concluded by an alliance of marriage between the two kingdoms. It is here that the prophecy of verse six resumes the narration — “in the end of years they shall join themselves together.”



The marriage to seal the alliance resulted in great misfortune. “The king’s daughter of the south” was Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The “king of the north” was Antiochus Theus. The problem is that

Antiochus already had a wife, Laodice. In order to effect the alliance, Laodice was put away. There were strong motivations for this alliance — Antiochus had rebellions in the north and east, and he needed peace with Egypt — Philadelphus had sustained losses and was ready for peace with Syria. However, the divorce of Laodice would have tragic consequences.

Antiochus Theus soon had a son by Berenice. Neverthe-

less, Antiochus left her in order to live again with Laodice in Asia Minor. He apparently loved Laodice, for the city of Laodicea in Asia Minor, famous as the city of one of the seven churches in Revelation, was founded by him and named for his wife. About this time Ptolemy Philadelphus passed away — perhaps it was this loss of his alliance partner which allowed Antiochus to return to his former wife.

But when Antiochus Theus returned to Laodice, she was intent that she not be disowned a second time. She



had him poisoned, and had her son **Seleucus Callinicus** installed as the new king of Syria. Subsequently her partisans at Antioch killed Berenice, her young son, and apparently her Egyptian attendants.<sup>1</sup>

Thus “she [Berenice] shall not retain the power of the arm [of her new husband Antiochus Theus]; neither shall he stand [poisoned by Laodice], nor his arm:<sup>2</sup> but she [Berenice] shall be given up, and they that brought her [her attendants], and he whom she brought forth [following the rendering in the margin, referring to her young son],<sup>3</sup> and he that strengthened her in these times [her father Philadelphus who had passed away].”

Years later would come another marriage alliance between Syria and Egypt (verse 17). It would unfold very differently; we will come to it later. These rare experiences dynamically affected the history of these kingdoms. The prophecy which mentions them is brief, but so specific that the application is evident, once fulfilled.

### *The Third Generation*

This disaster precipitated a third war between Egypt and Syria. The new king in Egypt, **Ptolemy Eugertes**, was the brother of Berenice. He promptly invaded Syria.



This invasion is often supposed as retribution for the death of his sister. But the Roman historian Marcus Julianus Justinus puts it as an effort to prevent her death.

“As for Berenice, when she heard that assassins were sent to despatch her, she shut herself up in Daphne [near Antioch in Syria]; and it being reported throughout the cities of Asia, that she and her little son were besieged there, they all, commiserating her undeserved misfortunes from their recollection of the high character of her father and her ancestors, sent her assistance. Her brother Ptolemy, too, alarmed at the danger of his sister, left his kingdom, and hastened to her support with all his forces. But Berenice, before succour could arrive, was surprised by treachery, as she could not be taken by force, and killed.”<sup>4</sup>

**Verse Seven.** Verse seven refers to this invasion by Egypt into Syria. “But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up [Ptolemy Eugertes became king] in his estate [in place of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the one who had “strengthened” Berenice, mentioned at the end of verse six. The roots of Berenice would be her parents, and her brother Eugertes was a branch out of the same roots], which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail” (Daniel 11:7).

The invasion by Eugertes was wholly successful. He occupied Seleucia, seat of the Syrian kingdom, “the fortress of the king of the north.” He also took Antioch and even pressed on to Babylon. “He shall prevail” — he did indeed. Verse eight also speaks of his success.

**Verse Eight.** “And shall also carry captive into Egypt their gods with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold” (Daniel 11:8). Porphyry,<sup>5</sup> preserved in Jerome, reports that Ptolemy returned to Egypt with 40,000 talents of silver, and 2500 precious vessels and metallic images, including Egyptian idols which Cambyses had carried from Egypt into Persia more than two and a half centuries earlier. (He says it was this that earned him the name Eugertes, “Benefactor,” by his Egyptian subjects).<sup>6</sup>

The last part of verse eight says “and he shall continue more years than the king of the north.” That would be true, for he outlived Seleucus Callinicus about four years. But other renderings give a different thought, “and he on his part will refrain from [attacking] the king of the North for some years” (New American Standard version). This is also true, for it was not until Callinicus later invaded Egypt unsuccessfully that war resumed.

**Verse Nine.** Verse nine, in the common version, says “So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return unto his own land.” This would mean that Ptolemy Eugertes returned home to Egypt, where there were reports of sedition, whereas he might have stayed in the north and secured the entire kingdom for himself.

However, most translations render the text differently. Here is the American Standard Version as an example. “And he [Callinicus, the king of the north referred to at the end of verse eight] shall come into the realm of the king of the south, but he shall return into his own land” (Daniel 11:9). This would refer to an abortive counter-invasion by Callinicus. If this is the meaning, then it accords better with the context. For verse ten begins “But his sons,” and “his” refers to Callinicus (as we will see shortly). So what preceded this, namely verse nine, apparently also refers to Callinicus (rather than to Eugertes).

The abortive counter-invasion of Egypt by Callinicus is referred to also by Justinus. After speaking of a misfortune suffered by Callinicus (the loss of a fleet), Justinus writes “It was indeed a lamentable occurrence, and yet

such as Seleucus [Callinicus] might have desired; for the cities, which from hatred to him had gone over to Ptolemy, being moved, by a sudden change in their feelings, to compassionate his loss at sea ... put themselves again under his government ... therefore ... enriched by his loss, he made war upon Ptolemy, as being now a match for him in strength; but as though he had been born only for a sport to fortune, and had received the power of a king only to lose it, he was defeated in a battle, and fled in trepidation to Antioch."

Presuming this a true record, it appears to be the proper fulfillment of verse nine. It was a highly unusual venture, for Callinicus might have lost his entire kingdom to Eugertes earlier. To have recovered sufficiently to attempt a counter-invasion of Egypt seems remarkable. But it was too ambitious. It failed, as the prophecy indicates it would.

Some time later, Callinicus fell from a horse and died. But this was not the end of animosity between the two kingdoms. Verse 10 describes the intensity in the next generation.

**Verse Ten.** "But his [Callinicus'] sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress" (Daniel 11:10).

Notice — his sons, plural, are stirred up, but only once advances. Seleucus Ceraunus prepared for war against Egypt, but in his third year he was assassinated by his generals. His brother, Antiochus Magnus, ascended the throne and took the fight southward. Again, this uncommon point of history is distinguished uniquely in the prophecy.

The last portion of verse 10, through verse 19, describes the illustrious career of Antiochus Magnus, who acquired his description "the Great" from his successes in battle. There is much to speak of here, and we hold it for the next installment.

### **Review**

Verses five through ten have taken us briskly through the high points of three generations in Egypt, up to the fifth generation in Syria.<sup>7</sup> In so few words, the peculiar and important parts of this history are recorded. In real life, odd things happen. By identifying these oddities, mixed with reference to major campaigns between the kingdoms, the narrative is uniquely specific.

From the unusual relationship between Seleucus Nicator and Ptolemy Soter, to the marriage alliance between the kingdoms and its tragic consequences, to the unique booty Egypt took from Syria and the abortive counter invasion which followed — the narrative distinctly matches prophecy to history. For Daniel, it was all a foreboding, indistinct future. For us, it is a testimony to the foreknowledge of God and the sanctity of his word.

(1) Justinus attributes the demise of Berenice and her young son to the newly installed Seleucus Callinicus, but encouraged by his mother. "On the death of Antiochus, king of Syria, his son Seleucus, succeeding in his stead, commenced his reign with murder in his own family, his mother Laodice, who ought to have restrained him, encouraging him to it. He put to death his step-mother Berenice, the sister of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, together with his little brother, her son" (same reference as footnote 4).

(2) "Neither his arm" — perhaps referring to his wife Laodice, who later came into a dispute with her son and new king, Callinicus. This dispute resulted in a clash between Callinicus and his brother Antiochus Hierax, and even a civil war, but those details are passed by in the prophecy.

(3) If the normal rendering, "and he that begat her," is correct, then this would refer to her father rather than her son. But the rendering from the margin makes the prophecy more complete by accounting for the disposition of her son as well.

(4) [www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/english/trans27.html](http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/english/trans27.html) (December 16, 2007). This is an English translation of the Latin work of Marcus Julianus Justinus, section 27.

(5) Porphyry was a philosopher who lived from about 234 to 305 AD. He was born in Tyre, and wrote perhaps 60 treatises, most now lost. Of these the most well known is one titled "Against the Christians," reportedly of 15 volumes, of which only fragments are preserved in the writings of others. Volume 12 was against the prophecy of Daniel. He imagined the fit of narrative to fulfillment meant the prophecy was written after the fact. However, his comments on how history did fulfill the passage may preserve some part of history now lost to us, and this is the value of his work. Porphyry's remarks on Daniel are preserved in Jerome's Commentary. Jerome's work can be found at ([www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome\\_daniel\\_02\\_text.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_daniel_02_text.htm)). Extracts of it which cite Porphyry can be found at ([www.attalus.org/translate/daniel.html](http://www.attalus.org/translate/daniel.html)). Evidently there is a recent work titled *Porphyry Against the Christians: The Literary Remains*, Translated by R.J. Hoffmann (Guildford, 1994), which we have not accessed.

(6) The record of 40,000 talents of silver, and 2500 precious vessels and gods, apparently comes from Porphyry. Here is his comment, cited by Jerome.

"Laodice, fearing that Seleucus might change his mind again and give preference to Berenice, murdered her husband by persuading his servants to poison him. She handed over Berenice and her son by Antiochus to be killed by Icadius and Gennaeus, the leaders of Antioch, and she set up her elder son, Seleucus Callinicus, as king in his father's place ... After the murder of Berenice and the death of her father Ptolemaeus Philadelphus in Egypt, Berenice's brother Ptolemaeus Eugertes became the third king [of Egypt] ... and he arrived with a large army and invaded the province ... of Seleucus Callinicus, who was reigning in Syria with his mother Laodice. Ptolemaeus worsted them and was so successful that he conquered Syria and Cilicia and the Eastern regions on the other side of the Euphrates, and almost the whole of Asia. When he heard that a rebellion had started in Egypt, he ransacked the kingdom of Seleucus and carried off 40,000 talents of silver and 2500 precious vessels and statues of gods, including those which Cambyses had carried off after conquering Egypt. Later the [idolatrous] Egyptians gave their king the name Eugertes [benefactor] because he had brought back their gods after so many years" ([www.attalus.org/translate/daniel.html](http://www.attalus.org/translate/daniel.html)).

There is a difference between these comments and those we cited from Justinus earlier. Here it is said that Ptolemy Eugertes became king, and invaded northward, after the death of his sister Berenice. Justinus said Eugertes invaded upon hearing of his sister's jeopardy but was too late to save her. Probably Justinus gives the better account because we can see no motive for imprecision here on his part as a simple historian of events. Whereas, Porphyry may have been misled by a supposition incorrectly drawn from the prophecy that the invasion by Eugertes followed the demise of his sister.

(7) By the time Antiochus Magnus came to the throne, Ptolemy Euergetes had passed away about a year earlier. Thus the prophecy in verse 10 brings us to the fourth generation in Egypt, and the fifth in Syria.

## The Period of the Kings

### (Part Two)

In our last issue, we discussed synchronizing the kings of Judah and the kings of Israel into a cohesive history. This is done by comparing the scriptural record of the two kingdoms, generation by generation. When we do this, it is apparent that there were occasional overlaps of regnal years of kings of the same line, mostly caused by coregencies. The extra count of years thus produced in the kingdom of Judah comes in five parts — 4, 4, 24, 8, and 11 years.<sup>1</sup> The sum of these is 51 years.

If we take a simple sum of the reign lengths of the kings of Judah, the total is 394 years.<sup>2</sup> Deducting from this the 51 years of overlaps, reduces the total to 343 years. Zedekiah lost his kingdom in the summer of 587 BC. Going back 343 years from there takes us to 930 BC. That would be the year in which Solomon's reign came to an end, and the divided kingdom commenced.<sup>3</sup>

The five periods of overlap are as follows.

(1) A four year coregency of Jehoshaphat with his aged father Asa. The reason for this coregency was apparently the declining health of Asa. In the last years of his long reign of 41 years, he was diseased in his feet "exceeding great" (2 Chronicles 16:12).<sup>4</sup>

(2) Judah briefly changed from accession to non-accession year reckoning at the time Athaliah from Israel married into the Kingdom of Judah. The reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah and Joash were reckoned this way, which means four years are double-counted, one for each ruler.

(3) A coregency of Amaziah with his son Uzziah of 24 years. Amaziah inadvisably challenged the king of Israel to a battle. Amaziah lost, and he himself was taken captive. As a consequence, "all the people of Judah took Azariah (Uzziah), which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah" (2 Kings 14:21). But later Amaziah was released, and in fact outlived his captor by many years (2 Chronicles 25:25). Thus Judah had two kings, each duly installed.

(4) Jotham judged the land on behalf of his elderly and leprosus father, Uzziah. This, and some complexities at the close of his life, reduces Jotham's sole reign from 16 years to eight years.

(5) The long 55 year reign of Manasseh includes 11 years as coregent with his father Hezekiah, beginning at age 12, the age of responsibility. Hezekiah had received an extension of life for 15 years, and was preparing young Manasseh for his future reign in these last years.

Each of these reductions is explained in detail in Appendix B of *The Stream of Time*, free to any requestor. The same material is covered even more rigorously in 20 pages in "Time and Prophecy," available on the internet.<sup>5</sup> Keep in mind that these reductions are not arbitrary, and they are not optional. They are forced by the data recorded in Kings and Chronicles.

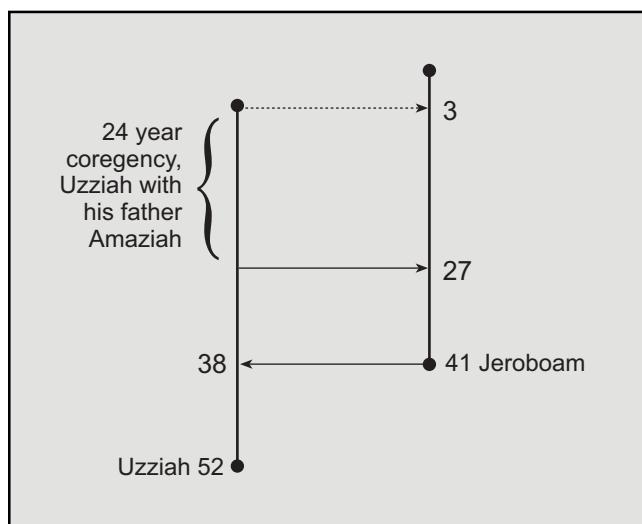
Some brethren determine, arbitrarily, to simply dismiss the history and data recorded there. There is no justification for this. In doing this, they simply dismiss a vital part of the scriptural record. In times past, when the harmony of the two kingdoms was not apparent, it is understandable that one might resolve the quandary by simply summing the years of one kingdom or another. But today that approach is no longer defensible. "We may see some day just how they [the scriptures about the kings of Judah and Israel] can be harmonized" (*Question Book*, 1911, page 42). That day has come, and the information it brings is very timely.

### One Example

We will explain here one of the coregencies, the longest of them, in order to give the reader a sense for how these matters are determined from the scriptural data. We will discuss the 24 year coregency between Amaziah and his son Uzziah. We have already explained the circumstances — Uzziah was enthroned by the people after the capture of his father, not knowing that he would later be released. But now we discuss the numbers involved.

Jeroboam (the second) ruled Israel for **41 years**. He died in the **38th year** of Uzziah of Judah (2 Kings 14:23, 15:8). Therefore it is apparent that Uzziah began to reign 38 years earlier, which would be the **3rd year** of Jeroboam. However, 2 Kings 15:1 says Uzziah (Azariah) began in the **27th year** of Jeroboam, **24 years** later! How is this reconciled?

Uzziah began to reign in year 3 of Jeroboam in one sense, and in year 27 of Jeroboam in another sense. This is explained by a coregency. Uzziah became king as



coregent in year 3 of Jeroboam. When his father died 24 years later, then Uzziah began his sole reign in year 27 of Jeroboam.

### Confirmation

In our previous issue, we referred to an **independent** means of dou-



Seal of Shema, servant of Jeroboam II, King of Israel, contemporary of Amaziah and Uzziah.

ble checking our results. This comes from comparing the history of the divided kingdom with the history of the Assyrian Empire. This is possible because links between the two are given in the Scriptures, and also in the state records of Assyria. When the chronology customary among brethren was first formed close to two centuries ago, this independent testimony was not available. But now it is, and it proves to be of great advantage, as it gives a second witness for this period of history.

There are two types of documents left by the Assyrian Empire which provide a record of years of the latter centuries of their empire. One is a list of names — called limmus, or eponyms — each one assigned a separate year. It was the practice in Assyria from very early times to assign the name of some court official to a given year, so that a list of those names constituted a list of years, for record keeping purposes. Sometimes a prominent event for that year was recorded next to the name. That might be a special temple service, the conquest of some city, the installation of a new king, or even as in one famous example, the record of a solar eclipse (June 15, 763 BC).

In addition to these "limmu lists," sometimes called "eponym canons," there were also king lists. These listed the kings who reigned, and the number of years assigned to their reigns. By comparing these king lists with the limmu lists, a double thread of testimony can be tightly interwoven. There are other records which link the latter years of Assyria with the history of Babylon, so that we can count from Babylonian times backward, and assign dates to every year of the last three centuries of the Assyrian Empire.

By this means, the 10th year of Assur-dan, king of Assyria, falls in the year 763 BC. The "limmu" for that year was one named "Bur-sagale." The comment for that year in the limmu list is "Revolt in the city of Assur. In the month of Simanu an eclipse of the sun took place." Consistent with this comment, in the year 763 BC, there was a dramatic solar eclipse over Assyria which took place on June 15 (Julian date). It is this package of materials which gives historians a high degree of confidence in the history of the Assyrian Empire, as far back as 911 BC.

### Comparison

Now we are ready to compare the results secured from Kings and Chronicles, with the results secured

from the state records of Assyria. We begin far back, during the reign of Shalmaneser III of Assyria. In his sixth year occurred a famous conflict known as the battle of Qarqar. The records of Shalmaneser mention a coalition of kings that he opposed, and among them is Ahab of Israel. Twelve years later, in the 18th year of Shalmaneser, he took tribute from Jehu of Israel. As it turns out, there are exactly 12 years between the last year of Ahab, and the first year of Jehu — so this fixes year six of Shalmaneser III to the last year of Ahab, which was Ahab's year number 22.

More than a century later, another Shalmaneser came to the throne in Assyria, Shalmaneser V. This is the Shalmaneser which the scriptures name as the king of Assyria who sieged Samaria for three years, at the close of the reign of Hoshea, last king of the 10 tribe kingdom. This Shalmaneser reigned for five years, and the limmu lists for his years 2, 3, 4 record "against ..." with the location name being illegible.

So the three year siege of Samaria by Shalmaneser recorded in the Bible (2 Kings 17:3-5), and the three year campaign by Shalmaneser in the Assyrian records, match up together. Which means Samaria fell to Assyria in the 4th year of Shalmaneser. This ended the nine year reign of Hoshea (2 Kings 17:1).

When one maps out the kings of Judah and Israel, from year 22 Ahab to year 9 Hoshea, there are exactly **130 years**. (An insert sheet of this mapping appears in *The Stream of Time*.) Meanwhile, in Assyria, here are the kings which ruled from Shalmaneser III to Shalmaneser V, from the state records of Assyria.

### Assyrian Kings

35 Shalmaneser III

13 Shamsi-adad V

28 Adad-nerari III

10 Shalmaneser IV

18 Assur-dan III

10 Assur-nerari V

18 Tiglath-pileser III

5 Shalmaneser V

137

- 6 To begin in 6th year of Shalmaneser III

- 1 To end in 4th year of Shalmaneser V

**130** Years from 6 Shalmaneser III to 4 Shal. V

From the 6th year of the first one, to the 4th year of the last one, is also exactly **130 years**. These results are highly encouraging. We do not offer this as evidence for the integrity of the Scriptures — that stands on its own merit. We offer this as an evidence that we have properly understood the scriptures, and reconstructed the history of the divided kingdom correctly. (By the way, the dates involved are 853 BC for the 22nd and last year of Ahab, and 723 BC for the 9th and last year of Hoshea.)

It is this kind of evidence which gives historians who respect the integrity of the Scriptures, both clarity and confidence respecting the results. The landmark study which produced these results is the well known book *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* by Edwin Thiele, now deceased. His line of evidence, and his treatment of some texts, has been improved. But his essential conclusions for the length of the divided monarchy remain firm.

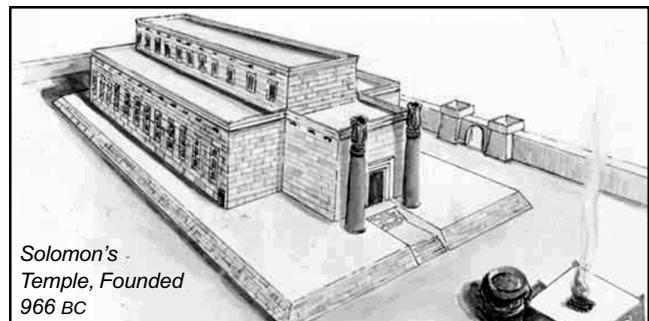
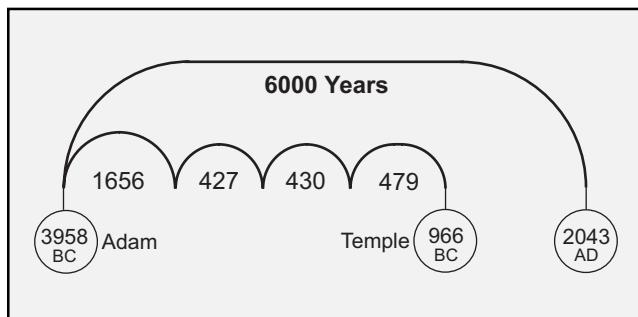
### **Connecting the Thread**

The duration of the Kingdom of Judah, from the division of the kingdom when Solomon died, to the end of Zedekiah's reign, was 343 years. The scriptures tell us the end of the kingdom came in the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar (accession year reckoning), or 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar (non-accession year reckoning). The years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar are firmly dated in history — his 18th year commenced with Nisan of 587 BC. We will explain the evidence for this date another time. For now, we simply note the consequences.

If we add 343 years, backward from 587 BC, we arrive at the year 930 BC. That would be the year the divided kingdom commenced. That would also be the 40th and last year of Solomon — from Tishri 931 BC, to Tishri 930 BC.

That means that the 4th year of Solomon commenced 36 years earlier, with Tishri of 967 BC. Therefore the spring of Solomon's 4th year fell in the year we number 966 BC. This is the time that 1 Kings 6:1 says Solomon commenced the building of his temple — 479 years after the Exodus. Thus the date of the Exodus was 1445 BC.

Counting back through the scriptures from there, the covenant with Abraham was 430 years earlier (1875 BC), the end of the flood 427 years earlier (2302 BC), and the creation of Adam 1656 years earlier (3958 BC). Thus the close of 6000 years from Adam would be 2043 AD.



(1) The last coregency occurred between Hezekiah and Manasseh, after the 10 tribe kingdom had ended. That coregency is recognized from the scriptural record of Sennacherib of Assyria invading Judea in the 14th year of Hezekiah, and the scriptural record of Josiah's death while opposing Pharaoh Necho's advance to Carchemish to confront the army of Babylon. The former was in the fourth year of Sennacherib, 701 BC, the latter in the 17th year of Nabopolassar, 609 BC.

(2) Remember that this allows seven years for Athaliah, because 2 Chronicles 23:1 specifically identifies a seventh year. Sometimes her reign is taken as six years, which would mean a total of 393 years. That, added to 40 years each for Saul, David and Solomon, yield a total of 513 years, which is familiar to some of our readers. This number reduces by 50 years due to overlaps. If one counts seven years for Athaliah then the total would be 514 years, which then reduces by 51 years due to overlaps. The final answer is the same either way.

(3) Some writers on this subject correctly observe that to be explicit, one should use a terminology such as 588T and 931T for these dates — which means the Hebrew years which commenced with Tishri of 588 BC, and Tishri of 931 BC, respectively.

(4) His disease was sufficiently advanced to merit notice in the official register in year 39 of his reign. But his declining health before the problem advanced to this stage was probably the cause for adopting his son as coregent the year before.

(5) Google "Time and Prophecy" and "1995". The same material is treated at even greater length in the 200 pages of Edwin Thiele's study, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*.

## **New Website Announcement**

*Fresh Design, Comprehensive Layout*

Our website has been updated, with a fresh design and comprehensive layout. It should prove of interest and value for all students of Scripture. The design highlights our hopes, which so engage us, for the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ within but a generation more.

The new site includes eight main categories — Journal, 6000 years, RVIC, Reference, Bible Students, Library, Russell, and Resources.

We encourage you to visit the site — **2043ad.com** — and become familiar with its offerings. It will take some time for us to fill in all the categories. Check the site's "Weekly Spotlight" frequently for updates.