

Jerusalem—City of Destiny

My Story From Antiquity to Eternity

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As the rising sun cast its light on my hills and valleys that Friday morning, the multitudes within my walls sensed that something was about to happen. It was filled with people at that time, for it was the time for the celebration of the Passover. Pilgrims from all over had come to celebrate the Feast. Among them was the Prophet from Galilee. On the previous Sunday He had triumphantly entered my walls to the adulation of the multitudes. They shouted:

Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! (Matt. 21:9)

He was worthy of that praise, for He was no ordinary prophet. He was the one foretold by Zechariah, the prophet, centuries before.

See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey. (Zech. 9:9)

He was the Son of God, who had become the Son of Man to save people from their sins. Yet, how quickly the mood of the people had changed. The leaders of my people hated Him. They had tried to discredit Him, but failed. In their plotting against Him, they decided everyone would be better off if they put Him to death. In a sense, they were right.ⁱ They enlisted the aid of one of His disciples in arresting Him.ⁱⁱ On Thursday evening they seized Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. After going through the motions of a trial, the Sanhedrin condemned Him to death.

Now, as the sun rose, they took Him to the residence of Pilate. They desired to leave Pilate condemn Him to death. The fickle multitudes followed the example of their leaders. Their shouts of praise quickly turned to curses. “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” they cried. They wanted to see this Jesus crucified. However, so did His Father in heaven. This is why He had been sent. This is why He had come.

Before I go any further, however, let me introduce myself and tell you the account of what led up to this event. I am Jerusalem - The City of Destiny.

Chapter One—Jerusalem the City

First of all, let me tell you a little about myself and my history. I am strategically located in the center of the world. Many ancient literary sources spoke of me as the “navel of the earth”.ⁱⁱⁱ In a spiritual sense, I certainly do serve as the center of the world. It was on my ground that God’s Son poured out His blood to redeem mankind from sin. My earth shook as the angel of God came from heaven to roll the stone away from His tomb, showing the world he had risen.^{iv} It was within my environs that God’s plan of salvation was carried to completion.

In Biblical times I was considered to be at the center of the physical world from a geographical point of view. I am situated practically in the center of the Holy Land. Strategically positioned in the highlands, I lie on the north-south watershed, on a natural plateau along the trunk road almost midway between the fertile plains of Galilee and the parched desert sands of the Negev. For centuries, merchant caravans and invading armies traversed this important highway through the central mountain range, the backbone or Palestine.^v Whether a traveler went from north to south, or east to west, he would often travel through my territory.

I am a beautiful city, and I can say that quite objectively. Many an individual has stated that about me. Majestic hills and picturesque valleys form my landscape. The Psalmist wrote:

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people. Ps. 125:2.

A geological study of my land will serve to show the material the Lord used to make me the way I am. Two types of limestone form the base of my hills: Cenomanian and Turonian. Cenomanian is hard and quite capable of withstanding erosion. It is difficult to quarry and thus is not usually employed as ordinary building material. Turonian limestone, though quite durable, is made of various layers. Therefore, it is easier to quarry. Well aerated, especially when exposed to the circulation of air, it becomes a hard stone, very useful for building materials. In fact, my people used it for my walls, public buildings, and the Temple. My entire Old City is one large Turonian limestone dike, running from north to south.

The mixture of these hard and soft ingredients explain my hills and valleys. On my western side, some of the hard Cenomanian and softer Turonian limestones were split apart to form the Valley of Hinnom. On my east, hard Turonian limestone and soft Cenonian chalk were broken off to form the deep Kidron valley. The Old City is set apart from north to south to form the Tyropoeon Valley, and from east to west to form the Transversal Valley. Eastwards, across the Kidron Valley stands the Mount of Olives. Made of Cenomanian chalk, the Mount of Olives is about 250 feet higher than my Moriah peak. The lower slopes of the Mount of Olives are of Turonian limestone. Nary stone forms the top of the adjacent Mt. Scopus.

From a geological point of view, I can be divided into four geographical sectors, according the peaks of my hills. The Ophel-Moriah spur in the southwest is separated from the Bethesda hill by the Transversal Valley on the northeast. Mt. Zion, on the southwest, is separated from the Hill of Ghareb on the northwest by the Transversal Valley.

The fertile soil of my valleys originates in the eroding process of the Cenomanian and Turonian limestone of my hills. During the rainy season, rich deposits are washed down into my valleys. Water sources originate in the Turonian limestone layers of my city, such as the springs of Gihon and Ein-Rogel. Thus, water is provided to grow plants and sustain life.

The principal plants that grow in my area are the olive and fig trees. The Turonian limestone of the Mount of Olives and the nary stone of Mt. Scopes erode to form an excellent soil, conducive to the cultivation of the olive tress which grace the western slopes of the Mount of Olives. Though my climate during the summer months may be very hot and dry, Turonian limestone preserves moisture very well. Olive trees flourish in such conditions.

Two types of figs are grown in my ground. The early, green fig is the sweeter. The dark purple late fig is delicious, but not as sweet. Date palms, almonds, pomegranates, artichokes and roses thrive in my Kidron Valley. My rocky base also served another purpose. Unlike the people of the coastal plain or the Jordan Valley

who buried their dead in the sandy soil, my people interred their deceased in natural caves or sepulchres cut out of the rock. David, Solomon, the kings of Judah, and the King of Kings Himself all were laid to rest in such a tomb.

Now that I have told you a little about myself, let me tell you a little about my history.. There are some references made to my early history in sources outside the Bible. A recently discovered cuneiform tablet from the city of Ebla in northern Syria bears the name “Urusalim”. This tablet dates to the third millenium BC.^{vi} The name Jerusalem also appears in Egyptian hieroglyphic writing in the Execration Texts of about 2000 BC.^{vii} A third reference to me occurs in the Assyrian cuneiform tablets of the Amarna correspondence (circa 1400-1350 BC).^{viii}

From my earliest history, then, I was a Canaanite stronghold built on a physically defensible mound. From this tiny spur my physical growth and historical fame expanded to make me one of the greatest cities of the world. My true greatness, however, lies in my connection with King David and his greater Son. Permit me, then, to tell you my story as: Jerusalem - the Destined.

Chapter Two: Jerusalem, The Destined

The earliest reference to me in Scripture already gives an indication of the purpose God had for me. Though this purpose is not directly stated in prophecy, my destiny is intertwined with men who were to serve as pictures of the coming Savior. Moses relates that when Abraham returned from his rescue of Lot, Melchizedek, king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of God Most High, met him. This Melchizedek served as a picture of the Savior to come, as the Scriptures clearly show.^{ix} In Melchizedek the offices of king and priest were combined, as they were in the Christ. The Aaronic priesthood served merely as a picture of Jesus, the coming Reality. Only the Son of God and the son of Mary could offer the one perfect sacrifice for sins.^x Melchizedek, the type, who had no successor, lived in me. Jesus Christ, the Reality, carried His work to completion in me.

Moses also relates that Abraham was told by the Lord to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, on Mt. Moriah. Moriah may be identified with my Temple Mount. There Solomon built the temple with the great altar of burnt offering.^{xi} The countless sacrifices offered there served as pictures of the one supreme sacrifice for sin to be made by God's only Son.

It is in connection with King David, however, that my destiny is most clearly revealed. Israel was granted a number of victories over my earlier inhabitants.^{xii} Yet, the Jebusites persisted in their hold on my territory until the days of David.^{xiii} After his coronation in Hebron as king over all the tribes, David marched to my territory to attack the Jebusites.^{xiv} In their hands, I was like a wall dividing Israel in half. For about 400 years my inhabitants had held out against the Israelites.^{xv} They were so confident that they taunted David saying,

You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off (2 Sam. 5: 6) .

Yet, by using the water shaft from the Gihon spring Joab led David's men in conquering the Jebusites. After that, David took up residence in my fortress. For his defences, he used the Jebusite wall, although he made repairs in it.^{xvi} It was here, then, that David ruled for 33 years as king over all Israel. It was here, also, that David brought the ark of the covenant to rest after its long journey.^{xvii}

From here David exerted his authority over surrounding nations. Two victories in the Valley of Rephaim gave David domination over those inveterate enemies of Israel, the Philistines.^{xviii} Moabites,^{xix} Arameans,^{xx} Edomites,^{xxi} Amalekites,^{xxii} and Ammonites^{xxiii} became subject to him.

It was at this time, then, that the Lord made clear the place David would serve in His plan of salvation. I have the privilege, then, of being the city which David's son and Lord would carry this work to completion.

When David expressed his desire to build a place to house the ark of the Lord, God told David:

Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?... The Lord declares to you: When your days are over, and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son ... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever (2 Sam. 7:5, 11b-14a, 16).

Though this prophecy found its immediate fulfillment in David's son, Solomon, who was to build the temple, it found its final fulfillment in the Savior born to Mary. This is confirmed by the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary:

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end (Luke 1:31-33).^{xxiv}

Among the descendants of David's line, then, was to be the Savior of the world. Though He was to come from the line of David, He would still be David's Lord.^{xxv} David would die, and so would his descendants.

The Messiah, however, would conquer death and reign forever at the right hand of God.^{xxvi} It is no wonder, then, that David expressed his amazement at this prophecy. He said:

Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant (2 Sam. 7: 18).

The man of destiny, however, was to be tried and refined. Part of the trial was of his own doing. While his army was besieging Rabbah of the Ammonites,^{xxvii} David remained in Jerusalem. Leisure time served as the spawning ground for lust. This lust for another man's wife consumed David as a raging fire burns dry grass. Ignoring the voice of his conscience^{xxviii} and the revealed will of God^{xxix} David indulged his lust with Uriah's wife. When she became pregnant, his attempts to cover up his sin proved futile.^{xxx} He reasoned his only hope for solving his "problem" was eliminating Uriah. In that way he could marry Bathsheba and claim the child as his own. Thus, David sent Uriah to Joab with the message for his own execution. When Uriah was murdered through the agency of the Ammonite army,^{xxxi} David took Bathsheba as his wife.

Lust, adultery, murder, all seemed to have been accomplished with a minimum of difficulty. Bathsheba bore a son as a result of the adulterous union and David lived on in impenitence. The ancestor of the Messiah was living like a descendant of the evil one. we read:

The thing David had done displeased the Lord (2 Sam. 11:27) .

Though impenitent, David was not impervious to the voice of his conscience. It gave him no peace.^{xxxii} Finally, the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to bring David to confess what he was trying to suppress: his sin against God.^{xxxiii} Confronted by Nathan with his sin, David confessed:

I have sinned against the Lord (2 Sam. 12 13).

David was comforted by the announcement of God's' forgiveness. Yet, from this point on, the Lord in His wisdom and love would sharply discipline David. The purpose was to show God's displeasure over sin^{xxxiv} and to keep David close to the Lord.

Thus, Nathan announced three disciplinary measures that David would suffer. The sword would never depart from his house.^{xxxv} What David had done secretly to another man's wife, one close to him would do publicly to his wives.^{xxxvi} The son born to David and Bathsheba would die.

The subsequent history of David shows how these disciplinary measures were carried out. The child born to David and Bathsheba did die.^{xxxvii} Yet, the grief served a good purpose. David, refined by trial, gave expression to his faith.

I will go to him, but he will not return to me (2 Sam. 12: 23b) .

God comforted David by the birth of another son, Solomon, who was to succeed him.

The troubles within David's own household caused bloodshed. Amnon, first-born son of David, was consumed by lust for his step-sister, Tamar.^{xxxviii}

Because he raped her, Absalom, Tamar's brother, assassinated Amnon.^{xxxix} Later, Absalom coveted his father's throne. After alienating the hearts of Israel,^{xl} Absalom occupied the throne as ruler. David was forced to flee across the Kidron Valley^{xli} which his greater Son was to cross a millenium later.^{xlii} Following the advice of David's

traitorous advisor, Ahithophel, Absalom violated ten members of David's harem on the roof of his palace.^{xliii} Thus, the disciplinary measure foretold by Nathan was carried out.

Absalom's rebellion led to his death. Felled in the Forest of Ephraim by Joab, Absalom was buried in a pit under a large pile of stones.^{xliiv} Upon learning of Absalom's death, David's heart overflowed with grief. Perhaps the saddest words ever spoken by a father were those spoken by David:

O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you - O Absalom, my son, my son! (2 Sam. 18:33) .

David's grief was not at an end yet. Civil war again erupted upon his return to my fortress. At Gilgal, the miffed men of Israel broke away from David under the leadership of Sheba.^{xlv} David's grief was compounded by Joab's assassination of Amasa, whom David had established as general in place of the vindictive Joab.^{xlvi} Sheba's rebellion ended with his death at Abel Beth Maacah,^{xlvii} and David again ruled as sole monarch in my fortress.

Thus, David's life in me served as a picture of the life of the Savior who would one day come from his line. Destined to be His ancestor, tried in the furnace of affliction, David was triumphant in faith. Confidently he could confess:

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand (Ps. 16:911) .

The age of David was an age of great spiritual renewal. David, the man after the heart of God,^{xlviii} checked for a time the idolatry that had plagued Israel in the past. The verdict of sacred Scripture on the reign of David is stated by the author of Kings:

For David had done what was right in the eyes of the Lord and had not failed to keep any of the Lord's commands all the days of his life - except in the case of Uriah the Hittite (1 Kgs. 15: 5) .

This concludes this portion of my history. My destiny, then, was intertwined with David and the Savior to come from his line. Yet, between David's time and that point in history when the Word became flesh, a number of events happened which threatened the integrity and destiny of the Davidic line. Only the faithfulness of the God of the covenant kept the Davidic destiny from being destroyed. One period of my history that shows quite clearly the seeds of destruction planted in the kingdom is the Solomonic era. Though many refer to this era of my history as my golden age, I realize that during this time I could be more aptly described as Jerusalem -The Tarnished.

Chapter Three: Jerusalem, The Tarnished

There are a number of reasons as to why people refer to the age of Solomon as my golden era. It was an age in which peace, prosperity, and the arts flourished. Let me tell you a little about that “golden” era. During the early period of his reign, Solomon solidified his political base by eliminating a number of threats to his throne. Co-conspirators Adonijah and Joab were executed for their attempt to usurp the rule.^{xlix} Abiathar, the high priest from the line of Eli, was deposed and sent back to Anathoth.¹ Shimei, the slanderer of David, was executed for his unfaithfulness.^{li} Thus, the kingdom was firmly established in Solomon’s hands. Solomon showed himself at first to be an able administrator. His immense building activities necessitated many sources of income. These were supplied by requiring forced labor and taxes from vanquished kingdoms as well as from the Israelite populace. Israel was divided into twelve administrative districts supervised by twelve governors.^{lii} Judah was not included among these districts, a fact not unnoticed by the rest of Israel. These districts had the responsibility of providing for the needs of the royal court, an immense task.^{liii}

The Davidic conquests insured peace during the reign of Solomon. Egypt’s power at this time was weakened, and she also had to court the favor of Solomon for a time.^{liv} The author of Kings describes the early reign of Solomon in this way:

The people of Judah and Israel were numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River (Euphrates) to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon’s subjects all his life (1 Kgs. 4:20-22) .

One reason for the able reign of Solomon was the wisdom given him by the Lord. Solomon went to Gibeon, five miles north, to offer sacrifices at the altar before the Tabernacle.^{lv} There the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream. He said: Ask for whatever you want me to give you (1 Kgs. 3:5). Solomon answered:

I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties...So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong (1 Kgs. 3: 7, 9).

The Lord answered Solomon in this way:

I will give you a wise and discerning heart ...Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for - both riches and honor ...And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life (1 Kg s. 3:12,13,14) .

Solomon exhibited his wisdom in his judicial rulings,^{lvi} his observations of botany and zoology,^{lvii} and his literary works.^{lviii} He exceeded all his contemporaries in the wisdom he possessed.^{lix} The queen of Sheba came to test Solomon with hard questions. She left, marveling!

The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard (1 Kgs 10:6-7).

The insight God gave Solomon was demonstrated in his literary works. The book of Proverbs is a practical application of wisdom to faith and life. The extant Solomonic Psalms,^{lx} the love parable of his Song, and the sadder -but-wiser discourse of Ecclesiastes give evidence of a divinely given wisdom. Though we cannot attribute the book of Job to Solomon, it may well have come from his time. Thus, the poet of Israel had a son who was the singer of sage songs.

My Solomonic age has been considered golden from another point of view, and that is in regard to his building activity. The most notable example I can mention is the Temple he constructed. The plans were given by the Lord.^{lxi} Material was collected by David.^{lxii} The site was a portion of my land used as a threshing floor. It was purchased by David from Araunah the Jebusite.^{lxiii} Solomon enlisted the aid of Hiram king of Tyre in the project.^{lxiv} Hiram, a master craftsman,^{lxv} Hebrew and Phoenician artisans,^{lxvi} cedars from Lebanon^{lxvii} were used in its construction. Seven years in the making,^{lxviii} it was a magnificent structure. It stood as a diamond in the tiara of my hills, crowning my verdant valleys.

Yet, magnificent as it was, Solomon himself had to confess,

The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you! How much less this temple I have built (1 Kgs, 8:27)

For four centuries^{lxix} this temple was to serve as a place of worship for my people and a reminder of the good things to come. All the daily sacrifices served to point to the sacrifice the Savior would one day make. Sad to say, my people did not always appreciate the significance of my temple. But, this I shall tell you of later.

Other projects of Solomon were his palace,^{lxx} supporting terraces for the city, a city wall, and the fortress cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer with their identical gates.^{lxxi} Gardens, parks, vineyards, and reservoirs dotted my hills and valleys.^{lxxii} Public buildings, agricultural settlements, and commercial centers were among his other works.^{lxxiii}

It was a gold golden age for commerce. Trade was conducted on an international scale by land and by sea. Joint ventures with Hiram's merchant marine brought in large quantities of money and goods.^{lxxiv} Ezion-Geber served as the terminal point for trade with southern Arabia.^{lxxv} Located at the north end of the Gulf of Aqabah, it contained a copper and iron smelting refinery. Located two and a half miles to the east was the old city of Elath. This site stood in the path of winds which howled down the Arabah, providing a natural draft for firing the smelters. The Arabah was rich in copper, and was profitably mined by Solomon.^{lxxvi}

Wealth abounded for a time in Solomon's reign. Gold in vast quantities flowed into my treasuries.^{lxxvii} Luxuries were commonplace in my homes.^{lxxviii} Perhaps the most telling statement made is that

the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills (1 Kgs. 10:27) .

Yet, all that glitters is not gold. A close examination of the golden era of Solomon reveals it to be sadly tarnished. Wealth led to extravagance.^{lxxix} The fortunes were squandered. During his reign Solomon was forced to pay his debt to Hiram with real-estate of questionable value.^{lxxx} Solomon's projects were built on the backs of his people. When he died, they wanted no more of heavy-handed tactics.^{lxxxi} Heavy taxation and forced labor left a bitter taste in their mouths. The favored status of Judah served as a divisive element in the kingdom.

Even worse was Solomon's violation of the Lord's covenant with His people. In violation of God's will^{lxxxii} he amassed horses from Egypt and a harem from heathen nations. It was in this latter respect that Solomon did the most damage. He married 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines,^{lxxxiii} one thousand heathen women in all.

Squandering the wisdom God gave him, Solomon acted the role of the fool. He condoned the idolatry of his heathen wives. Women married for political gain proved to be a spiritual liability to him. One of my hills was desecrated by the shrines Solomon built for the heathen worship of his wives.

As a result, the Lord stirred up trouble for Solomon. Adversaries arose from the north,^{lxxxiv} from the south,^{lxxxv} and from within.^{lxxxvi} Egypt, a former ally, now coveted again the trade routes of Israel. Adversaries of Solomon were harbored as fugitives by the Egyptian monarch.^{lxxxvii} The united monarchy would soon become a divided kingdom.^{lxxxviii}

.. The final verdict, then, which I can give on the rule of Solomon is, he was weighed in the balances and found wanting. Though I trust a sadder but wiser Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes at the end of his life, the damage

had been done. The political cause for the secession of the north was established. Even worse, the spiritual cause for the destruction of both kingdoms was entrenched again in the hearts of my people. A golden era was tarnished by unfaithfulness to God. The stage was set for my people to become inhabitants of: Jerusalem, the Unfaithful.

Chapter Four: Jerusalem, the Unfaithful

In His love, the Lord had betrothed my people to Himself.^{lxxxix}

When I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine (Ezekiel 16:8).

Yet, my people became faithless to a faithful husband.^{xc}

You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband! Every prostitute receives a fee, but you give gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from everywhere for your illicit favors. So in your prostitution you are the opposite of others; no one runs after you for your favors. You are the very opposite, for you give payment and none is given to you (Ez. 16:32-34) .

How did my people's unfaithfulness show itself? It was demonstrated in idolatry and entangling alliances with foreign powers.^{xci} A lack of love for God also showed itself in a lack of love for others. Thus, the Lord said:

See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her - but now murderers (Isaiah 1:21) !

What brought about such a change in the hearts of my people? What caused such degradation in them that the Lord declared:

Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence (Jeremiah 15:1) ?

Let me tell you how my people became unfaithful, and the devastation this led to.

At the time when Rehoboam succeeded his father, Solomon, the seeds for the division of the kingdom were already sown. The rivalry between north and south, evidenced in Israel's early history, was still present.^{xcii} Judah's favored status under Solomon did little to promote harmony with the rest of Israel. Rehoboam's trip to Shechem for his coronation was a conciliatory gesture toward the northern tribes. Yet, the division of the kingdom had been decreed. Division was to happen as a result of Solomon's sin.^{xciii} Rehoboam's rash reply to Israel may have been the immediate cause for division, but the ultimate cause was the hand of the Lord.^{xciv}

Division was but the prelude to degradation. The northern kingdom soon embarked on a course which led to its final destruction. Jeroboam I introduced calf worship in the north. He altered the essence and direction of Israel's worship though he maintained a semblance of the outward form.^{xcv} The results were disastrous for Israel and my people. A perversion of the worship of Jehovah served to make the transition to the wholesale worship of Baal quite easy. Religious syncretism^{xcvi} became the order of the day. People who lived with Canaanites and shared their agricultural concerns soon adopted their fertility rites. Jeroboam, then, corrupted and destroyed Israel's relationship with God.

My people also were led astray by this evil influence from the north. Already during the days of Rehoboam, my people

set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites (1 Kings 14: 23-24).

The evil influence from the north became worse during the days of Ahab. It came to me through the intermarriage of the houses of Ahab and Jehoshaphat.^{xcvii} Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, married Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab.^{xcviii} Of all the kings of Israel, Ahab did the most to corrupt his people.

There never was a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife, He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the Lord drove out before Israel (1 Kings 21; 25) .

Though Jehoshaphat did a number of good things, his entanglement with Ahab's house overshadowed all else he did. He made it possible for the evil influence of Ahab to corrupt the line of David. His joint ventures with Ahab,^{xcix} Ahaziah,^c and Jehoram^{ci} drew the rebuke of the Lord.^{cii} My kings, Jehoram and Ahaziah, followed the evil example of Ahab.^{ciii} Athaliah, Ahab's daughter, even usurped my throne for a while after the death of Ahaziah.^{civ} The result of all of this was that the influence of Baal was ingrained in the hearts of my people and their rulers. The evil example of evil rulers resulted in evil subjects.

The influence of Ahab showed itself again and again in the rule of my kings. Idolatry in its worst and vilest forms was practiced by them. Though Amaziah^{cv} made a good beginning, he fell miserably. After his victory over Edom in the Valley of Salt,^{cvi} Amaziah brought back the Edomite idols and set them up in me for worship.^{cvi} During the reign of Ahaz^{cviii} idolatry also flourished. Ahaz rejected the Lord's help against Aram and Israel.^{cx} Instead he sought the help of Tiglath-Pileser III, king of Assyria.^{cx} After the sack of Damascus by Assyria,^{cx} Ahaz imported the heathen worship of the Arameans.²⁴^{cxii} Perhaps the most telling indictment against him is stated in this way:

He shut the doors of the Lord's temple and set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 28:24).

Manasseh,^{cxiii} son of Hezekiah, also showed the influence of Ahab. He probably did more than any other of my kings to drag my people toward the inevitable maelstrom of the Babylonian captivity. His reign sealed the devastation of my people.^{cxiv}

In both courts of the temple of the Lord he built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft and consulted mediums and spiritists (2 Chronicles 33:5-6).

My hills became altars to idols, and my valleys burial places for children sacrificed to demons. Both Manasseh^{cxv} and Ahaz^{cxvi} before him sacrificed their sons in fertility rites.

The result of the evil influence of Ahab's house on my kings and people was stated by the Lord through Isaiah the prophet.

Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption. They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One and turned their backs on him (Isaiah 1:4).

It is true that at certain points in my history attempts were made to change things. Yet, they only amounted to a reformation, not a transformation of my people. While sane kings were able to clear the land of the visible evidences of idolatry, they could not remove the clutter of idolatry from my people's hearts. The good beginnings of some kings, such as Asa,^{cxvii} Jehoshaphat,^{cxviii} Joash,^{cxix} and Uzziah^{cxx} were negated by the evil they did at the end of their lives.

Two kings stand out as exemplary in this period of my history. They are Hezekiah^{cxxi} and Josiah.^{cxxii} Though their hearts were right with God, they could not change my people's hearts. The zeal they showed for the Lord is well documented on the pages of Holy Writ.^{cxxiii} Yet, my people did not share their zeal. Though

Hezekiah could create a tunnel through my rock to bring water from the spring Gihon to my pool of Siloam,^{cxxiv} he could not break through the rocky hearts of my people.

The Lord Himself had tried. He spoke to my people through his prophets. He condemned their unfaithfulness. He pleaded with them:

Come now, let us reason together ... Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be like wool (Isaiah 1:18).

He disciplined them to call attention to their sin. During the reign of Rehoboam, Shishak of Egypt sacked me as he went north to establish his control over the trade routes through Israel.^{cxxv} During the days of Jehoram I was sacked by Philistine and Arab raiders.^{cxxvi} Jehoram was struck with a painful disease.^{cxxvii} Scripture records that

he passed away, to no one's regret (2 Chron. 21:20) .

Six hundred feet of my walls were broken down by Jehoash of Israel after he defeated Amaziah in battle.^{cxxviii} I was threatened by Sennacherib of Assyria during the days of Hezekiah.^{cxxix} Manasseh was led from me captive to Babylon by the Assyrian monarch.^{cxxx} There he humbled himself before the Lord. Upon his return, his efforts at reform were too little and too late. My people's devastation was coming, for their hearts were hardened. Micah declared:

You will go to Babylon (Micah 4:10).

My people would not listen. For unfaithfulness, I was to become: Jerusalem, the Devastated.

Chapter Five: Jerusalem, The Devastated

In the year that king Uzziah died, the Lord called Isaiah the prophet to preach to my people. When Isaiah asked,

For how long, O Lord?

the Lord answered,

Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitants, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken (Isaiah 6:11-12).

By the time Josiah died in battle with Neco at Megiddo^{cxxxix}, this devastation was imminent.

In the past centuries, events had taken place in the arena of world history which would now have a bearing on my history. Egypt was a broken reed.^{cxxxix} Though she reasserted her power for a time after the days of Solomon, she was never to be the dominant power in world history again. Hoshea of Samaria found that out to his chagrin when he appealed to So of Egypt for help against Assyria.^{cxxxix} The help from Egypt never materialized. Aramean power, a thorn in the side of Israel and my people for several centuries, was also broken. The rise of Assyrian power began with Ashurnasirpal II (883-859) and continued as a dominant force for the next two centuries. During this time Damascus was sacked,^{cxxxix} Samaria was destroyed, its people deported,^{cxxxix} and Babylon and Persia were suppressed.^{cxxxix} Under Esarhaddon^{cxxxix} other conquered nations were resettled in Samaria.^{cxxxix}

The result was the formation of the race of the Samaritans.^{cxxxix}

I also was threatened by the Assyrian power. Yet, the Lord was not to use them as the final tool of His avenging justice. This role was reserved for another race, the neo-Babylonian empire. Under Nabopolassar^{cxl} of Babylon the Assyrians were driven out of Babylon. In 612 BC, as Nahum had foretold, the city of Nineveh fell to the coalition of Cyaxeres the Mede and Nabopolassar. The remnant of the Assyrian army fled to Haran in northern Syria. It was at this time that Egypt put aside its hostility toward Assyria in the face of a new threat from the northeast. Neco of Egypt marched north to aid the remnant of the Assyrian army against the Chaldeans.

Josiah felt called upon to stop the march of Neco through his territory. Though Neco tried to dissuade him from intervening, Josiah insisted on going to battle against him. They met in battle at Megiddo, where Josiah met his death.^{cxli} Jehoahaz, his son, was deposed by Neco and deported to Egypt. Eliakim, Jehoahaz's brother, was placed on my throne and renamed Jehoiakim.

The aid of Egypt was not enough to stop the Babylonian blitz against Assyria. In 605 BC Egypt and Assyria were defeated at the battle of Carchemish. The Assyrian empire lay in ruins. The power of Egypt was decimated. I became a vassal to Babylon. In 605 Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon at the news of his father's death. At this time, then, he took with him a number of my royalty and nobility.^{cxlii} Among the young people taken away were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Daniel was to serve as a statesman in Babylon until the time of the Persian empire. With this first group of exiles, my devastation had begun.

Nebuchadnezzar's renewed campaign against Neco of Egypt was interrupted when he returned to Babylon to regroup and replenish his forces. His absence encouraged Jehoiakim to rebel and seek help from Egypt. He built a huge palace at Ramat Rahel to garrison a large military force close to his capital.^{cxliii} Jehoiakim was wicked, and he built his palace at the expense of his people.^{cxliv} He apparently was assassinated^{cxlv} when news of the Chaldean onslaught was received by my people. His son and successor, Jehoiachin, reigned only three months. He was forced to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC.^{cxlv} He was carried off into exile in Babylon, and replaced by his uncle, Zedekiah.^{cxlvi} Among the 10,000 other people taken into exile was Ezekiel the prophet. From 597-586 BC, it was his task to tell the people in exile of my

forthcoming destruction. Their false hopes that soon they would return to me had to be quenched. I was to be destroyed. The captivity would be a long one.

Jeremiah, the prophet from Anathoth, had the same task as Ezekiel. He served within me as my eleventh hour prophet, foretelling my coming devastation by the Chaldeans.^{cxlviii} My people harbored the false hopes that the Lord would never allow me to be destroyed. After all, I was the holy city. How could the Lord allow His holy city to fall into the hands of the unholy Babylonians? God's holy temple was within me. How could God allow the heathen to desecrate His sanctuary? Yet, Jeremiah showed that God's city and temple had already been desecrated by the wickedness of my people. Just as Shiloh^{cxlix} had been devastated, so now would be my temple and my city.^{cl} Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel spoke in graphic terms of the terrible things that would happen to me. Yet, my people would not listen. Ezekiel's hearers said:

He prophesies of the distant future.^{cli}

Jeremiah was condemned as a traitor.^{clii} Yet, what they foretold did come to pass. My people were to be exiled for seventy years,^{cliii} and I would be devastated.

Zedekiah was my final monarch. He was wicked and antagonistic toward the message of Jeremiah. Encouraged by the pro-Egyptian party at his court, Zedekiah turned to Pharaoh Hophra for help. The Palestinian states met in me to plot their revolt. The message of Jeremiah to this meeting was ignored.^{cliv} Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to the plot was swift. In 588 BC Jerusalem was under siege. From his headquarters at Riblah on the Orontes River, Nebuchadnezzar was able to take my Judean strongholds one by one. Finally, only Lachish, Azekah, and I were left.^{clv} The Lachish letters^{clvi} written prior to her destruction give one a glimpse of the difficulties of life at that time.

My people received a brief respite when Nebuchadnezzar withdrew his siege to deal with the advancing Egyptian army.^{clvii} My people thought that now they were rescued and Jeremiah's prophecies were false. Yet, it was their hopes which were false. As Jeremiah foretold,^{clviii} the Babylonians dispatched the Egyptian army and returned to my siege. Famine raged within me.^{clix} Cannibalism broke out.^{clx} During the summer of 586 BC the end came.^{clxi} My walls were breached. Zedekiah was captured while trying to escape. After watching his sons be executed, his eyes were put out. He was led away a captive to Babylon where he died.

Nebuchadnezzar's

troops deported most the remnant of my people. They carried off whatever else was of value. My buildings were burnt, my walls were razed. Truly, I was left devastated. As the Chronicler wrote,

The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah. (2 Chronicles 36:21).

It was Jeremiah, then, who took up a lament for me after my destruction. He wrote,

How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has become a slave.

Bitterly she weeps at night, tears upon her cheeks. Among all her lovers there is none to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her they have become her enemies.

After affliction and harsh labor Judah has gone into exile. She dwells among the nations; she finds no resting place. All who pursue her have overtaken her in the midst of her distress.

The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to her appointed feasts. All her gateways are desolate, her priests groan, her maidens grieve, and she is in bitter anguish.

Her foes have become her masters, her enemies are at ease. The Lord has brought her grief because of her many sins. Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe (Lamentations 1: 1,5).

I was devastated, yet not forsaken. I still had hope. My hope was in the faithful God who would not fail to keep His promise. He had promised to use the people of Israel as the cradle for the Christ, the line of David as the seed of the Savior. Like Lazarus, so I was to be called from death to life. The Lord said to Ezekiel as he beheld a valley full of dry bones

Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says. O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them. I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord. (Ezekiel 37: 11-14)'.

The Lord in His grace and faithfulness would bring a remnant of my people back to me so the promise of the Savior could be fulfilled. Thus, it was the Lord who gave me new life. By His grace I became Jerusalem, the Waiting.

Chapter Six: Jerusalem, the Waiting

Babylon rose to the zenith of its power under Nebuchadnezzar. He was succeeded by a number of kings who did not possess his administrative ability. Thus, the power of the empire soon began to decline. It did this quite rapidly under the reign of Nabonidus.^{clxii} He busied himself with archaeological excavations in the west rather than with the administrative duties of his kingdom. While doing this he lived at Tema, an oasis in the Hejaz region of Arabia. To tend to the affairs of state, Nabonidus appointed his son Belshazzar as co-regent. All the while this was happening Cyrus of Anshan was preparing to take the kingdom of Babylon. In 550 BC he conquered Acemetha and inherited the vast kingdom of the Medes. In 546 he defeated Croesus, king of Lydia, and captured his capital at Sardis. Bit by bit Cyrus drew the noose around Babylon. In 539 the Babylonian forces were crushed at Opis on the Tigris River. Soon thereafter the city fell to Cyrus' general, Gobryas, without a battle.^{clxiii} Cyrus was welcomed as the restorer of the ancient worship of Marduk, neglected by Nabonidus during his reign. Belshazzar apparently died in connection with the occupation of the city.^{clxiv}

The impregnable walls of Babylon, built by Nebuchadnezzar, proved to be useless. God had decreed the city was to fall.^{clxv} It did. The Lord had a purpose for Cyrus. Two centuries earlier, Isaiah had written:

The Lord says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please, he will say of Jerusalem, 'Let it be rebuilt' and of the temple, 'Let its foundations be laid.'" (Isaiah 44:28)

Cyrus was concerned about courting the favor of his newly conquered subjects. His desire was to make the transition to power as smooth as possible. Thus, he allowed government officials to continue their administration. He showed respect for the gods of all nations. His policy of toleration served the purpose of the Lord. God would use Cyrus as His tool to free my people.

In 539 BC, then, Cyrus issued his edict allowing the exiles to return home. He gave them back the sacred vessels of the temple. He helped provide for its reconstruction.^{clxvi} Yet, only a small group of exiles returned to me. Many had settled down in Babylon. They had homes there, businesses and family ties which they did not wish to break. Besides, I was not an attractive place to return to. For close to 50 years I had been lying in ruins.^{clxvii} My walls were broken down, and my city was a heap of rubble.^{clxviii} My temple mount was overgrown with thickets. I had become a haunt of wild animals.^{clxix}

Yet, the Lord moved about 50,000 of my people to return.^{clxx} When they arrived and settled down around me, they assembled within me for the purpose of rebuilding the altar of burnt offering.^{clxxi} The Levitical form of worship was again to be carried on. The pictures of the coming reality were to be kept before my people's eyes. My people were waiting for the promise of the Lord to be fulfilled.

Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, work began on the temple. Soon, the foundation was again laid. Though this evoked joy from the hearts of some, it brought sorrow to the hearts of others.^{clxxii} They remembered the former splendor of my temple. Now that was gone, and reconstruction was just beginning.

Eager anticipation soon turned to anxious waiting. The Samaritans were able to halt the work on my temple for 15 years. Angry because my people refused their request to participate in the construction of the temple, they lodged false accusations against my people with the Persian monarchs. It was not until the reign of Darius I^{clxxiii} that work was again resumed on the temple.

Anxious waiting soon gave way to complacency.

These people say, 'The time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built.' (The Lord says,) 'Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?' (Haggai 1:2-3)

The work of Haggai the prophet coupled with the admonition of Zechariah moved my people to action.^{clxxiv} Work again began on the temple. Tattenai, governor of the Trans-Euphrates, requested Darius to make a search of the royal archives for the edict of Cyrus. The search revealed that Cyrus had indeed issued an edict allowing

my people to rebuild the temple. Darius issued a memorandum forbidding anyone to hinder this work. Thus in 515 BC work on the temple was completed.

As my people waited for the One foreshadowed by the worship of the temple, problems arose which again threatened my Davidic destiny. Intermarriage with heathen women took place in violation of the Lord's command.^{clxxv} Ezra, descendant from Aaron's line,^{clxxvi} had just returned from Babylon during the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia.^{clxxvii} He dealt with the problem swiftly and decisively. All foreign women and their children were to be sent away.^{clxxviii} The Davidic line was to be preserved for its destiny.

Though my temple was rebuilt and completed by 515 BC, my city walls continued to lie in ruins. They had been that way since their destruction in 586. About 141 years after their destruction, the Lord caused them to be rebuilt. The man the Lord used to accomplish this was Nehemiah, cupbearer for King Artaxerxes of Persia.^{clxxix} When Nehemiah heard of my plight,^{clxxx} he requested a leave of absence from his duties.^{clxxxi} Granted this, he came to me in 445 BC. In spite of numerous difficulties with my enemies^{clxxxii} and my own people^{clxxxiii} he energetically pushed forward with the rebuilding of my walls. In 52 days the task was accomplished.^{clxxxiv}

The physical rebuilding of my walls was coupled with a spiritual rebuilding of my people. Ezra the scribe again taught my people the precepts of the Lord.^{clxxxv} My people confessed their sins^{clxxxvi} and ratified again the covenant with the Lord.^{clxxxvii} Thus, my walls were dedicated with joy and thanksgiving which could be heard far away.^{clxxxviii}

Twelve years later Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes.^{clxxxix} After a brief stay, he returned to me and again took care of a number of problems which had developed with my people. Desecration of the temple,^{cxc} neglect of offerings,^{cxc} work on the Sabbath,^{cxcii} and intermarriage,^{cxciii} even in the high priest's family,^{cxciv} threatened my destiny. Forcefully^{cxcv} and directly Nehemiah dealt with these problems, as did Malachi, his contemporary. The last prophet of the Old Testament, Malachi heightened the expectation of God's waiting people when he wrote:

Suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple, the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come, says the Lord Almighty. (Malachi 3:1).

With that note the voice of the Old Testament prophets became still. The period of eager anticipation and waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises continued. Though the next Biblical references we have tell us of that time when the Word became flesh, there is a period of history which we must examine between the testaments. This period of history we call the Intertestamental Period. It gives us the account of how history led to the fulness of time^{cxcvi} when God's Son became flesh. Between the days of Malachi and the Messenger of the covenant, great changes took place.

In the days of Malachi the population was scanty, the cities were heaps of rubbish, the land everywhere bore the marks of long desolation; the poverty of the many was aggravated by the rapacity of a few. In early New Testament days Palestine appears as one of the most densely populated parts of the Roman Empire. Its cities are crowded, its terraced hills are cultivated to the last inch. The merchants of Palestine share in and largely control the trade of the Mediterranean world.^{cxcvii}

Great differences in society, language, culture, and politics are apparent in the two eras. It is not possible for me to tell you every phase of my subsequent history. Yet, let me tell you of those influences and changes which brought about my metamorphosis from the days of Malachi to the time of the Messiah.

Politically, world domination had shifted from the east to the west. As foretold by Daniel,^{cxcviii} the Persian empire^{cxcix} gave way to the empire of Alexander.^{cc} His empire stretched from Europe to India. Upon his death, Alexander's empire was divided among his generals. Two of them are of great importance as far as my history is concerned. Ptolemy I^{cci} became the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty that ruled Egypt down to 30 BC.

Seleucus I^{ccii} founded the Seleucid dynasty of Syria. This included Babylon, Asia Minor, and eventually Palestine. The Seleucids ruled from 323 to about 125 BC.

During this time the influence of Greek life and culture was pressed upon my people. Previously, Aramaic had become the spoken language of my people at the end of the Old Testament era. Now the Greek language became a language used throughout the empire. In Alexandria, Egypt, a Greek translation of the Old Testament was made during the third century BC. Called the Septuagint (LXX), it represented the unequal efforts of a number of people who over a century worked at rendering the Hebrew Old Testament into Koine Greek. Just as the Aramaic Targums^{cciii} were needed in Palestine and Babylonia when Hebrew ceased to be a living language, so a Greek translation of the Old Testament was also necessary for the Jews of Egypt and elsewhere. This Greek translation of the Old Testament was also known and used by Jesus and His Apostles.

Another important development of this time was the synagogue. Before my destruction the temple was the focal point of my people's religious life. After the temple was destroyed, sacrifices ceased. Yet, the study of God's Word continued. The exiles knew the captivity was to be a long one. Thus, gatherings took place for the study of God's Word, such as took place in Ezekiel's house.^{cciv} These gatherings became more regular and more organized in nature, resulting eventually in weekly synagogue services.^{ccv}

After the return from exile, the second Temple was built. This again became the focal point of my people's religious life. For those who did not return to Jerusalem, the synagogue filled their religious needs. For those who returned to Palestine, the synagogue became the place of prayer and Bible study. The temple was the place of sacrifice. Each community had its synagogue and Sanhedrin.^{ccvi} but my Sanhedrin attained the preeminence among the Jews. It became known as the Great Sanhedrin. It was presided over by the High Priest and met in a hall associated with the temple structure. All of this helps to explain the religious scene of Jesus' day.

The acceptance of and resistance to Greek influence also had an impact on my people. The Seleucids in particular often tried to force Greek culture on them. The worst case was that of Antiochus Epiphanes IV.^{ccvii} He desired to make Graeco-philes out of all his subjects. Some of my people did adopt Greek customs at this time. Others resisted strongly. Antiochus, in an attempt to Hellenize me, captured my inhabitants, plundered my people, devastated my buildings, and desecrated my temple. He introduced into it the worship of the Olympian Zeus.^{ccviii} My walls were thrown down, and the old city of David was fortified and used as a Syrian garrison.^{ccix}

Though some people complied, the family of Matthias Maccabaeus led the resistance to Antiochus' attempts at Hellenization. In 165 BC Judas Maccabaeus^{ccx} restored to my temple its former worship. The feast of Hanukkah or Rededication took place on Kislev 25.^{ccxi} This also became known as the feast of lights. Together with the feast of Purim,^{ccxii} it is one of the major festivals to come from this time.

The rule of the Hasmoneans,^{ccxiii} descendants of Matthias Maccabaeus and his sons, coincides with the growing parties of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. Some of my people were willing to attempt a synthesis of Greek civilization and Hebrew religion. Others reacted violently against the attempts of Hellenization. Those who reacted against Hellenism were called the Hasidim, the pious ones. The Hellenizers and the Hasidim, then, served to give birth to the sects of Jesus' day. The Sadducees continued the basic ideology of the Hellenizers. The Pharisees and the Essenes sought to preserve the basic tenants of the Hasidim.

Although the Pharisees and Sadducees are frequently denounced together by Jesus, they had little in common but their hatred for Him. Theologically liberal and politically orientated, the Sadducees formed the aristocracy and controlled the high priesthood. Temple administration was their specific responsibility. They made their peace with the political rulers and attained positions of wealth and influence. During this time the office of high priest became a political prize. Thus, the religious interests of the office were pushed into the background.

The party of the Pharisees is first mentioned during the reign of John Hyrcanus.^{ccxiv} The word Pharisee means separated one. Their zeal for the law moved them to separate from attempts to Hellenize them. Ceremonially conscious and ritually right, they were extremely zealous for the Law. Their particular domain was the synagogue. Concerned about the application of the law, the Pharisaic scribes developed a system of oral tradition which proved to be a great burden to my people. The Pharisees often quoted the case decision of

famous rabbis who had been consulted concerning the application of the Law to a specific problem. Thus, the average person was often faced by a number of conflicting opinions on any given issue.

During the first century BC, two famous schools of legal thought developed under Hillel and Shammai. The former was more moderate in his interpretations; the latter more strict. The Talmud speaks of 316 controversies between the two schools.^{ccxv} Shammai was also bitterly opposed to Roman rule, a viewpoint expressed by the Zealots in the days of Jesus. Their resistance to the Romans ultimately led to my destruction again in 70 AD.

The Essenes also followed in the tradition of the Hasidim. In their desire to escape the contamination of Hellenism, they withdrew into monastic communities. Their life was one of rigor and simplicity. The Bible and other religious books were studied and copied by them. They settled north of En Gedi, perhaps at Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.

In general, the influence of all three groups produced a barren spiritual landscape. Living faith was replaced by dead formalism. Concern for others was replaced by a concern for self-image. The form of worship remained while the essence was gone. Heartfelt thanks to God gave way to heartless indifference to the needs of men. Pious praise became pious platitudes. The worship of my people became sterile and barren. The people who had been waiting for a Savior from sin became more concerned about a deliverer from Rome.

In 63 BC Pompey enforced Roman rule over Palestine. The Hasmonean dynasty came to an end. About 47 BC, John Hyrcanus II became the *ethnarch* of Palestine, and Herod the Idumean was appointed my governor. After his death in 43 BC, he was succeeded by his son, known as Herod the Great. Herod's policy was loyalty to Rome, no matter who was in power. After the battle of Actium in 31 BC, he shifted his loyalty from the defeated Anthony to the victorious Augustus.

A great admirer of Graeco-Roman culture, Herod undertook to improve his kingdom. Whole cities were built or rebuilt. Samaria became Sebaste in honor of Augustus. Strato's tower became Caesarea; Aphek became Antipatris. Phasaelis was built in the Jordan Valley, north of Jericho. Anthedon became Agrippeion. Fortresses were built, such as the Herodium, Alexandrium, Hyrcania, Machaerus, and Masada. Gymnasiums, baths, parks, market places and streets were all part of his building program.

In my upper city he built a magnificent palace. It was guarded on the north by three strong towers. He named them Phasael, after his brother, Mariamne, in honor of his wife, and Hippicus, for his friend. He built a theater in my sector inhabited by wealthy Hellenizers. An inner wall was made to protect my upper city, and the North Gate in the Second Wall was strengthened. South of my temple Mount he built a stadium in my Tyropoean Valley.

Most important for my history was his work on my Temple. In 20/19 BC Herod began to renovate the Temple which was in need of repair. He doubled the area of the Temple esplanade. It was girdled with walls and porticoes. The most prominent feature was the basilica in the south of the square. He connected it with my upper city by a second bridge, now known as Robinson's arch. The Temple proper was rebuilt. It was finished in a year and a half with no interruption in the daily sacrifices. It took eight more years to complete the court. The outer court was open to the Gentiles and Jews not allowed further because of ceremonial defilement. There was the court of the women and the court of the Israelites. To secure control over the Temples Herod built the Fortress Antonia at the northwest corner of my Temple Mount.

Thus, with the Roman conquest of Palestine and the Herodian rule over my people, the time of waiting drew to its end. Greek had become a universal language. The Roman highways facilitated travel. The sects of Judaism had been born. The religious landscape was barren. Most were waiting for better conditions on earth rather than the forgiveness of their sins. Only a few pious souls, such as Simeon and Anna, were waiting for the consolation of Israel^{ccxvi} and the redemption of Jerusalem.^{ccxvii} Herod, who regarded himself as the King of the Jews, was to be supplanted by the real King of the Jews, the King of kings and Lord of lords. All things were now ready. As Paul stated,

When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons (Gal. 4:45).

The time of waiting was over. The hour of my destiny was here. With the birth of the Christ I became Jerusalem, the Blessed.

Chapter Seven: Jerusalem, the Blessed

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. (Is. 40:1-2)

Truly, I had been through periods of devastation. Anxiously, through trial and tribulation, I had been waiting for the advent of the One who would be God's Blessing to men. Now, the event of the ages was about to take place. God's Blessing was about to be bestowed. About 54 miles northwest of me, an angel appeared to a virgin named Mary in Nazareth. His message was one long awaited by pious souls in previous ages.

Do not be afraid Mary. You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:33).

God's Blessing was to come to men through a virgin.

When Joseph, her betrothed, heard that Mary was expecting a child he planned to divorce her, fearing she had been unfaithful to him. Yet, in a dream, the angel of the Lord told him,

Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:20-21).

Thus, as the Lord had promised ages ago,

the Word became flesh and lived for a while among us (John 1:44).

God gave His Blessing to men, just as He said He would. His promise to David was fulfilled.^{ccxviii} From David's line his son and Savior was born. That this might take place in Bethlehem, David's birthplace, as Micah had foretold,^{ccxix} the Lord caused Caesar Augustus to issue a decree. All in his empire were to enroll for taxation. For Mary and Joseph, this meant going to their home town.^{ccxx} Thus they made the trip past me five miles to the village of Bethlehem. There, as the Lord had promised, Christ was born.

What a miracle! The almighty God lay in a manger.^{ccxxi}

For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, The angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth. TLH 647:2

God sent His angels to proclaim the good news to men concerning the Gift He had given. The glory of the Lord flashed across the sky that eve, and a heavenly herald proclaimed the good news to simple shepherds below.

I bring you good tidings of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11).

This sole messenger was joined by the host of heaven. They sang,

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests. (Luke 2:14)

The shepherds came to see and went to share what they had seen and heard. Yet, their message apparently went unheeded. The miracle of the ages had taken place only five miles away from me. Yet, my people did not care. God's blessing went unappreciated by my people.

There were a few who were looking forward to the coming of the blessed One. It is in connection with the Lord's first recorded trip to me forty days after His birth that they received the answer to their prayers. In accordance with the Mosaic Law,^{ccxxii} Jesus was taken to the Temple. There in its courts Simeon was led to behold the Lord's Christ. The Lord had indicated he would not die until he saw the Savior with his own eyes. Taking the forty day old Jesus in his arms, he said

Sovereign Lord, as you have promised
You now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel (Luke 2;34-35).

The prophetess Anna also at that time saw Jesus. She beheld in Him the redemption of Jerusalem and of the world. After fulfilling their obligation in the Temple, Mary and Joseph returned to Bethlehem.

A while later my people were stirred by a visit of Magi from the east. They, too, came looking for God's Blessing to men.

Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him (Matt. 2:1,-2).

When King Herod heard that, he was deeply disturbed. So were all my people, for they knew how murderous Herod was. The title, King of the Jews, had been conferred upon him. He was insanely suspicious of anyone he regarded as a threat to his throne. He would kill anyone he felt was a threat to him. Even his Roman patron, Augustus, had remarked you were better off as one of Herod's swine than his children. Herod set out to ascertain when and where this new King had been born. My religious leaders were asked to produce the birthplace of this king. Though they knew the reference from Micah, they did not know or appreciate God's presence among them.

Herod sent for the Magi secretly and asked for information on when the star had appeared. He had no intention of worshipping the Christ. He only wanted to kill Him. Yet, God intervened. His blessing was safeguarded. Christ was taken to Egypt before Herod slaughtered the babes of Bethlehem. When Herod died, Mary and Joseph at the command of God returned to Judea. At that time they learned that Herod's son, Archelaus, ruled in his father's place.^{ccxxiii} Archelaus was a chip off the block. He was just like his father. Earlier he had brutally suppressed a riot in my streets. He also had murdered 3000 of my people at the Passover. Chaos and bloodshed characterized his reign. Thus, God directed Joseph to take his family to Galilee and live in Nazereth. There Jesus grew to manhood.

The next recorded visit of Jesus to me was when He was twelve years of age.^{ccxxiv} He joined Mary and Joseph in coming up for the Passover. Left behind when Mary and Joseph set out for home, Jesus spent His time in the Temple courts, most likely Solomon's portico. There he listened to the teachers of the law who usually

gathered there. He was about His Father's business. This also meant, however acting as man's substitute under the Law. Obedient to his parents. He returned to Nazareth with them. There,

He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men (Luke 2: 52) .

Luke gives us the details of the time when Jesus began His public ministry. He writes,

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene - during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiphas, the word of God came to John, son of Zechariah in the desert. (Luke 3:1-2).

John was designated to prepare the way for God's Blessing to men. John was the one spoken of earlier by Malachi^{ccxxxv} and Isaiah.^{ccxxxvi} Six months older than Jesus,^{ccxxxvii} John prepared the way for His ministry. At the age of 30, then, Jesus began His public ministry,^{ccxxxviii} after being baptized by John.^{ccxxxix} As our substitute, Jesus came to fulfill all righteousness for us.

It is in connection with Jesus' subsequent temptation that another trip to me is mentioned. John had been baptizing at Bethany or Bethabara, at the fords of the Jordan, near Jericho. After His baptism, Jesus was led to the wilderness of Judea to be tempted by the devil. In connection with one of the temptations Jesus was taken to the pinnacle of my Temple. There, Satan challenged Jesus to demonstrate His faith by jumping off a drop of about 130 feet straight down, not counting the descent into the Kidron below. Jesus met and overcame Satan in this case, conquering him for us.

The majority of Jesus' ministry is recorded as taking place in Galilee. It is John who records for us the details of Jesus' ministry in me prior to Holy Week. The first visit John records took place when Jesus came for the Passover.^{ccxxx} On this occasion He cleansed the Temple of the money changers, driving them from the basilica where they had set up their wares. The zeal for His Father's house consumed Him (Psalm 6:9; John 2:17). When my leaders demanded Jesus give them a sign to prove His authority to do what He had done, Jesus answered:

Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days. (John 2:19).

This amazed the Jews, for the Temple was in its forty-sixth year of construction. Begun by Herod in 20 BC, construction continued until the days of the procurator Albinus (AD 62-64). This was only a few years before the armies of Titus destroyed the Temple. My people did not understand that Jesus spoke of His resurrection froth the dead. Their eyes were blind to the Blessing God had sent to them.

After this, Jesus and His disciples went into the Judean countryside where He spent some time.^{ccxxxxi} John was baptizing at that time up north, at Aerton near Salim.^{ccxxxii} On His return to Galilee, Jesus went through Samaria to Galilee, meeting the woman at the well of Sychar.

The next visit to me John records is when Jesus came to celebrate a feast of the Jews.^{ccxxxiii} It was at this time Jesus healed the man who had been an invalid for 38 years. He found him at the pool of Bethesda, located in my northeast sector. Since Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath, He again incurred the wrath of my religious leaders. As time went on, this anger turned to hatred. Soon, they were plotting how they could get rid of Him. The next trip of Jesus to me which John records is when Jesus came secretly for the Feast of Tabernacles.^{ccxxxiv} Halfway through the Feast, He went to the Temple courts and began to teach. On the last day of the Feast, Jesus offered to my people the waters of life.^{ccxxxv} Sad to say, they preferred the parched state of their own unbelief. My rulers even tried to arrest Jesus. Yet, their attempt failed. When the Temple guards returned, they could only marvel:

No one ever spoke the way this man does. (John 7: 46).

According to John's account, Jesus left the temple, crossed over the Kidron, and went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn, He returned to my Temple courts.^{ccxxxvi} It was here the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees brought to Jesus the woman taken in the act of adultery. Here they also tried to stone Jesus for declaring Himself to be the eternal "I am". During this time Jesus also sent the blind man to the pool of Siloam to wash and be healed.^{ccxxxvii} Since this also happened on the Sabbath, Jesus again incurred the wrath and hatred of my leaders. Grieved by their hardness of heart, Jesus said:

For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind. (John 9:39).

Jesus remained here from the Feast of Tabernacles to the Feast of Dedication.^{ccxxxviii} At that time the Jewish leaders again tried to seize Jesus in Solomon's Colonnade, but He escaped their grasp. It was not yet His time.

John traces the trek of Jesus in this way. He tells us that Jesus crossed over the Jordan to where John had been baptizing early in his ministry.^{ccxxxix} He then returned to Bethany, two miles away from me.^{ccxli} There He raised Lazarus from the dead. After this event the Sanhedrin met to decide what to do with Jesus. They determined He must die. From that time on they plotted how they might kill Jesus. Jesus then withdrew from there to the village of Ephraim in the desert to my north. John states that Jesus then returned to Bethany six days before the Passover and dined with Mary, Martha., and Lazarus.

All four evangelists record the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.^{ccxli} As he descended the Mount of olives and saw the expanse of my city, He wept and said:

If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you. (Luke 23:92).

For the moment the crowds praised Him. By the end of the week they would be shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" For the time they placed their cloaks and palms before Him; by the end of the week they were urging Pilate to place the cross upon Him. As John wrote some years later,

He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him (John 1: 11).

The hour of salvation was here, but my people wanted no part of it.

After teaching in the Temple, Jesus returned to Bethany to spend the night.^{ccxlii} Returning to Jerusalem the next day He cursed the fruitless fig tree, using it as an example of the sterility of my people's worship and the barrenness of their hearts.^{ccxliii} Entering the basilica of the Temple, He again drove out the merchants and money changers. They had made His Father's house a den of robbers.^{ccxliv}

The next few days Jesus spent teaching in my temple courts. The animosity and anger of the Sanhedrin increased as they plotted Jesus' death. They hounded Him, scrutinizing His every word, trying to trap Him and discredit Him. Yet, they could find nothing against Him. However, Jesus had this to say about them:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. (Matthew 23:37-39).

When Jesus' disciples drew His attention to the beautiful buildings of my Temple, He said to them,

Do you see all these things?...I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.

Crossing over the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives, Jesus sat down at a point overlooking my Temple complex. At that point, Jesus' disciples came to Him and asked:

Tell us ...when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? (Matthew 24:3).

Jesus told His disciples that my destruction was imminent. It would also serve as a picture of the last days and the end of the world.^{ccxlv} Judgment was coming, for God's Gift had been offered and spurned. Men preferred to receive the due reward for their works.^{ccxlv}

On Maundy Thursday evening Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover meal in a large upper room in my upper city. Judas had already made his bargain with the Sanhedrin. He had sold his soul for 30 pieces of silver. The devil shortchanged him, as he later learned to his everlasting regret. The money he had coveted was used to buy a burial plot for indigent foreigners.

On this evening, Jesus both identified His betrayer^{ccxlvii} and foretold Peter's denial.^{ccxlviii} Yet, full of love for His disciples of all ages, Jesus gave another blessing to His church on that evening - the blessing of His Supper. Matthew,^{ccxlix} Mark,^{cccl} Luke,^{cccli} and St. Paul^{ccclii} record the event for us. That evening the Lord also revealed the great love in His heart. In His farewell discourse to His disciples,^{cccliii} He prepared them for the events which were about to happen.

After Jesus had completed the Passover with His disciples? He crossed over the Kidron Valley with them to the Mount of Olives. There, in the familiar place called Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, Jesus wrestled with the prospect that the next day He would suffer for the sins of the world. Nevertheless, He submitted His will to the will of His Father.

Yet, not as I will, but as you will. (Matt. 26:39).

Judas had already left the company of the Apostles. He, together with a large crowd, came to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. Knowing that His hour had come, Jesus turned Himself over to them to be led away. His disciples all forsook Him. Crossing over the Kidron Valley to one of the gates at the southeastern corner of the Temple compound, Jesus' captors took Him to the house of Caiaphas, located in my Upper City. There He was arraigned and condemned before Annas and Caiaphas. It was also at this time that Peter, waiting in the court by Caiaphas' house, denied His Lord three times.

Early on Friday morning Jesus was led to the palace of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. As governor, he would have resided either at the palace of Herod on my western side or at the fortress of Antonia north of the Temple. Since it was his main task to supervise the Temple during the Passover, we may assume that Pilate's praetorium was set up in Antonia.

When Pilate learned that Jesus belonged to the jurisdictions of Herod,^{cccliv} he sent Jesus to Herod Antipas. He probably was staying at the old Hasmonean palace, which was the residence of the Herods on their visits to me. Jesus was sent back to Pilate, as Herod found no basis for charging Him with anything. In the place known as the Stone Pavement, Pilate gave in to the pressure of the Jewish leaders. He handed Jesus over to be crucified. Carrying His cross, Jesus proceeded along the street leading from the Antonia to a spot outside my Second Wall. There, Jesus was crucified. He willingly gave up His life. After His death, He was buried in the tomb of Joseph, which was close by the spot of the crucifixion.

There are two important matters I wish to speak of at this time. One is the rejection of God's Blessing by my people. They rejected Jesus and preferred to have a criminal released to them. "His blood be on us and our children!"^{ccclv} they cried. Years later, this request was to be fulfilled. God had sent His Son to save men.

In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. John 1:4-5.

What a tragedy! God offered His Blessing to men, but my people preferred a curse.

The second important matter I wish to speak of is what God's Son accomplished in me. His death on the cross was not the end of a tragic life but the fulfillment and completion of a God-given mission. God's Son kept the Law for men. He paid the full price for the sins of all mankind. Before He died, He triumphantly declared:

It is finished! (John 19:28) .

His mission was accomplished. God had reconciled the world to Himself. My destiny, then was to be the altar on which God's Son would sacrifice Himself as the one perfect Offering for sin. For His sake, God declared the whole world forgiven.

That God accepted His payment is demonstrated by what happened on Easter morning. Jesus rose from the dead. Death could not hold Him. The angel rolled the stone away from the door of the garden tomb to proclaim to the whole world Christ had risen. His bewildered disciples saw Him with their own eyes. They touched Him and talked with Him. Beyond the shadow of a doubt He convinced them He had risen. Then, Jesus prepared His disciples for the work they soon were to do.

Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus ascended triumphantly into heaven from the Mount of Olives.

God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.
Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
For God is King of all the earth,
sing to him a psalm of praise;
God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne.
The nobles of the nations assemble
as the people of the God of Abraham,
for the kings of the earth belong to God;
he is greatly exalted. (Psalm 47: 5-9).

Jesus' disciples returned to me to await the promise of the Spirit, given by Jesus. From this point a new phase of my history began. Though my early history may be characterized by the growth of the Christian church in me, my later history can be characterized by apostasy. As Jesus had said, my house was to be left desolate. I was to become Jerusalem, the Desolate.

Chapter Eight: Jerusalem, the Desolate

The early part of my history is marked by the spread of the Gospel. Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus had promised His disciples:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8.

The disciples returned to me and waited for the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. On Pentecost it came. Empowered and emboldened by the Holy Spirit, the fearful disciples were transformed into fearless confessors of Christ. As a result of Peter's Pentecost proclamation, 3000 souls were added to the church. Daily they met in the Temple Courts. Daily the Lord added to their number.

Soon, persecution and oppression of the church set in. When Peter and John healed the lame man at the gate called Beautiful, the opposition of my leaders became public. Soon, they Apostles were arrested. Upon the advice of Gamaliel the Sanhedrin decided to release them. After the martyrdom of Stephen^{cclvi} and the persecution of the church by Saul,^{cclvii} the church spread into Judea and Samaria.^{cclviii} Only the Apostles remained in Jerusalem.

Yet, God in His grace had a purpose for all of this. As the Christians spread, the Gospel spread with them. Wherever they went, the message of the Savior went along. Even Saul of Tarsus became, by God's grace, the Apostle Paul. The Gospel spread into Asia Minor, Europe, and points beyond.

While all of this was going on, my people were experiencing a hardening. Stephen had declared:

You are just like your fathers. You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And you have betrayed and murdered him - you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it. (Acts. 7: 51-53)

Some time later, the Lord declared to Paul as he was praying in my Temple,

Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me ...Go, I will send you far away to the Gentiles. (Acts 22:21)

When Paul returned to Jerusalem at the completion of his third missionary journey, he was mobbed by people in the Temple courts.

Rid the earth of him. He is not fit to live (Acts 2: 21)!,

my people cried. All over the empire they had persecuted Paul and his message. They wanted nothing to do with Jesus and his work.

There were some exceptions. Paul wrote;

So too, at the present time, there is a remnant chosen by grace (Romans 11: 5).

Yet, believers among my people have been the exception. My subsequent history has been a bearing out of Jesus' words:

Your house is left to you desolate (Matt. 23: 38).

This desolation has been experienced in a physical and a spiritual way.

Through the ages I have been left desolate a number of times. I have been subjected to the ravages of war throughout the ages. In AD 70 the words of Jesus concerning me were fulfilled.^{cclix} The abomination of desolation stood in the Temple. Roman legions under Titus besieged and battered my walls. My Temple was destroyed and my people were killed by the droves. The treasures of my Temple were carried off to Rome. The daily sacrifice ceased. The third Temple period of my history came to an end.

In a sense, it is fitting that my Temple stands no more. It stood as a picture of the Reality to come. Upon completion of Christ's work, the veil in the Temple was ripped in two. The role of the Temple as a picture of things to come was over. The completed work of Christ dispensed with the need of a picture of future sacrifice. The sacrifice had been made and accepted. Now the message is a proclamation of the completed sacrifice of God's Son.

Today my people wail by the remains of the old western wall of what was part of my Temple complex. Yet, they miss the point. The one prefigured by my Temple came. His mission was accomplished. It is in Him and not in my Temple that salvation is to be found.

My desolation continued after 70 AD. When my people again revolted under Bar Kokhba, Hadrian crushed the revolt. In AD 135 he razed the city and rebuilt it as a heathen city. A temple to Venus was built over the site of Calvary. Hadrian erected a statue of himself on the site of my former Temple. Under Hadrian I became known as Aelia Capitolina.

Under Constantine Christianity became a legalized religion. The partial Christian influence of Constantine was soon supplanted, however, by the total heathen influence of Mohammed. The Byzantine period^{ccclx} with its emphasis on Christian relics and shrines was replaced by the early Muslim period with its emphasis on my Temple Mount as the supposed sight of Mohammed's ascension to the seventh heaven. In all of this, my desolation continued. The simple yet beautiful message of the Savior was obscured and ignored. Even the period of the crusades^{ccclxi} missed the point. The drive to free the Holy City from the infidels obscured the message of the Savior who had come to free men from sin. In 1187 Saladin took me and ended the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Christian shrines were made into Muslim mosques. The visible evidence of my desolation became more pronounced.

In 1948 the British mandate over Palestine was terminated by the founding of the State of Israel. After the Six Day War in 1967, Jerusalem was united under Jewish administration. Though today Christians, Jews, and Muslims revere me as a holy city, my desolation remains the same. The message of the Savior who redeemed mankind from sin is virtually unheard in my streets. Where it is heard, it is often obscured and obliterated by man-made systems of theology. My destiny was fulfilled when Jesus completed His work in me. In this world I will not serve as a center for the Gospel. Rather, my name now betokens another era yet to come. To those who believe on the Savior, my name is a reminder to lift up their eyes and look for Jerusalem, the Golden.

Chapter Nine: Jerusalem, the Golden

There are those who are waiting for me to become a center of Christianity. Their hopes are vain. They have misinterpreted a number of statements in Scripture.^{cclxii} They look for an earthly reign of Christ within me. This will not happen. My destiny was fulfilled when the Savior of the world carried out His work in me. One day, I too will pass away with the rest of the world.^{cclxiii} I will be replaced by the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

Lift up your eyes then, and await the Second Coming of your Lord. He has chosen you to be His; He redeemed you with His blood; He sanctified you by His Spirit. He will preserve you to the day of His Coming. Look ahead, then, to that day when the promises of God will be fulfilled.

Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. (Rev. 21: 3.-4) .

Portrayed as having foundations of precious stone, gates of pearl, and streets of gold,^{cclxiv} the city will be perfect in every way. Those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life^{cclv} will experience the fullness of joy at His right hand forevermore . Laying their crowns before His throne, they shall sing,

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise (Rev. 5:12).

St. John was privileged to behold a vision of the new Jerusalem. He wrote:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever (Rev. 22: 1-5).

In eager anticipation of the heritage which is yours through faith in Christ Jesus, join with the hymn writer in singing:

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest.
I know not, oh, I know not,
What joys await us there,
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare.

They stand, those halls of Zion,
All jubilant with song
And bright with many an angel
And all the martyr throng.

The Prince is ever in them;
The daylight is serene;
The pastures of the blessed
Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David;
And there, from care released,
The shout of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast;
And they who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white.

O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and *blessed* country
that eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
to that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father,
And Spirit ever blest.

The Lord has promised,

Yes, I am coming soon (Rev. 22:20).

In eager anticipation we pray,

Amen, Come, Lord Jesus (Rev. 22:20).

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[Bible quotations throughout are from the New International Version]

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ⁱ See John 11: 49-53

ⁱⁱ See Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:1-5

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Mackowski, *Jerusalem, City of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), p. 7.

^{iv} Matthew 28: 1-4

^v Mackowski, pp. 7-8.

^{vi} Mackowski, p. 26

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} See Psalm 110, especially verse 4; Hebrews 6: 20-7; 28

^x Hebrews 7: 26-28; 9: 11-14; 1 Peter 3: 18.

^{xi} 2 Chronicles 3: 1.

^{xii} See Joshua 10; 12: 10; Judges 1: 8.

^{xiii} See Joshua 15: 63; Judges 1: 21; 19: 10-12.

^{xiv} 2 Samuel 5: 6-9; 1 Chronicles 11: 4-8.

^{xv} To calculate this date, we use the following dates:

1446 BC Exodus (1 Kgs 6:1)

1406 BC Death of Moses, beginning of conquest of West Bank (Numbers 33: 38; Deut. 1: 3; Joshua 1: 1-2).

1400 BC End of conquest of Joshua (Joshua 14: 6-10).

1003 BC David becomes king over all Israel. Takes Jerusalem.

966 BC Beginning of Solomonic Temple (1 Kgs. 6: 1; 11: 43).

For more information see: Edwin Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), pp. 82-85.

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WELS, 1980), pp. 571-574.

^{xvi} 2 Sam. 5: 9; 1 Chron. 11: 8.

Hershel Shanks, *The City of David* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archeology Society, 1975), pp. 37, 114(18).

^{xvii} Shiloh (1 Sam. 4: 4) to Ebenezer to Ashdod (1 Sam. 5: 1) to Gath (1 Sam. 5: 8) to Ekron (1 Sam. 5: 10) to Beth Shemesh (1 Sam. 6: 12) to Kirath Jearim (1 Sam. 7: 1) to the house of Obed Edom (2 Sam. 6: 10) to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6: 16).

^{xviii} 2 Sam. 5: 17-25.

^{xix} 2 Sam. 8: 2.

^{xx} 2 Sam. 8: 5-6.

^{xxi} 2 Sam. 8: 13-14.

^{xxii} 2 Sam. 8: 12.

^{xxiii} 2 Sam. 10: 14; 12: 26-31.

^{xxiv} This is also confirmed by other references, such as Hebrews 1: 5; Ezekiel 37: 24-38; Is. 11: 1; Rev. 5: 5; 22: 16; etc.

^{xxv} See Psalm 110: 1; Matthew 22: 41-46; Romans 9: 5; 2 Tim. 2: 8.

^{xxvi} See Acts 2: 22-36.

^{xxvii} 2 Sam. 11: 1.

^{xxviii} Cf. Psalm 32, a penitential Psalm written by David sometime after Nathan confronted him with his sin. We may assume the pangs of conscience mentioned during his state of impenitence were present also before and during the sin.

^{xxix} Ex. 20: 14; Deut. 5: 18; Lev. 18: 20.

^{xxx} 2 Sam. 11: 5-13.

^{xxxi} 2 Sam. 11: 14-25.

^{xxxii} Psalm 32: 3-4.

^{xxxiii} Psalm 32: 5a, Psalm 51: 3-4.

^{xxxiv} 2 Sam. 12: 9; 10b; 14a.

^{xxxv} 2 Sam. 12: 10.

^{xxxvi} 2 Sam. 12: 11-12.

^{xxxvii} 2 Sam. 12: 15-19.

^{xxxviii} 2 Sam. 13: 1-20.

^{xxxix} 2 Sam. 13: 23-33.

^{xl} 2 Sam. 15: 1-12.

^{xli} 2 Sam. 15: 13-23.

^{xlii} John 18: 1.

^{xliii} 2 Sam. 16: 15-22. By laying claim to David's harem, Absalom also laid claim to the throne. This action also made clear the break between Absalom and David, thus making reconciliation improbable. This served to strengthen Absalom's conspiracy.

^{xliv} 2 Sam. 18: 6-17.

^{xlv} 2 Sam. 19: 40-20: 2.

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- xlvi 2 Sam. 19: 13; 2: 4-10.
- xlvii 2 Sam. 20: 15-22.
- xlviii 1 Sam. 13: 14.
- xliv See 1 Kgs. 1: 5-2: 34.
- ^l 1 Kgs. 2: 26-27.
- ^{li} 1 Kgs. 2: 36-46.
- ^{lii} 1 Kgs. 4: 1-19.
- ^{liii} See 1 Kgs. 4: 22-23. The daily provisions listed here would feed about 1500 people.
- ^{liv} See 1 Kgs. 9: 16.
- ^{lv} See 2 Chron. 1: 3-6.
- ^{lvi} 1 Kgs. 3: 16-28.
- ^{lvii} 1 Kgs. 4: 33.
- ^{lviii} 1 Kgs. 4: 32.
- ^{lix} 1 Kgs. 4: 31-32.
- ^{lx} Psalms 72 and 127.
- ^{lxi} 1 Chron. 28: 12, 19.
- ^{lxii} 1 Chron. 22: 2-5; 14-16.
- ^{lxiii} 2 Sam. 24: 18-25; 2 Chron. 3: 1.
- ^{lxiv} 2 Kgs. 5.
- ^{lxv} 2 Kgs. 7: 13-45.
- ^{lxvi} 1 Kgs. 5: 18.
- ^{lxvii} 1 Kgs. 5: 6.
- ^{lxviii} 1 Kgs. 6: 38.
- ^{lxix} From about 960 to 586 BC. See 1 Kgs. 6: 1, 38; 2 Kgs. 25: 28.
- ^{lxx} 1 Kgs. 7: 1-11.
- ^{lxxi} 1 Kgs. 9: 15.
- ^{lxxii} Ecclesiastes 2: 4-6.
- ^{lxxiii} Macmillan, p. 72. 1 Kgs. 9: 17-19.
- ^{lxxiv} 1 Kgs. 9: 26-28; 10: 11-12, 15, 22.
- ^{lxxv} 1 Kgs. 9: 26.
- ^{lxxvi} Charles Pfeifer, *Old Testament History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 276-277.
- ^{lxxvii} 1 Kgs. 9: 28; 10: 10, 14, 22.
- ^{lxxviii} 1 Kgs. 10: 18-21.
- ^{lxxix} Eccl. 2: 8-11.
- ^{lxxx} 1 Kgs. 9: 10-14.
- ^{lxxxii} 1 Kgs. 12: 4.
- ^{lxxxiii} Deut. 17: 14-20.
- ^{lxxxiv} 1 Kgs. 10: 26.
- ^{lxxxv} 1 Kgs. 11: 1-3.
- ^{lxxxvi} 1 Kgs. 11: 23-25.
- ^{lxxxvii} 1 Kgs. 11: 14-20.
- ^{lxxxviii} 1 Kgs. 11: 26-40.
- ^{lxxxix} 1 Kgs. 11: 18-19, 40.
- ^{xc} Ex. 19: 4-6; Ezekiel 16: 1-8.
- ^{xc} See all of Ezekiel 16 and 23; Jeremiah 3.
- ^{xc} Ez. 16: 15-19; 23-29.
- ^{xcii} See Judges 8: 1-3; 12: 1-6; 2 Sam. 19: 40-20: 2.
- ^{xciii} 1 Kgs. 11: 29-39.
- ^{xciv} 1 Kgs. 12: 15.
- ^{xcv} See. 1 Kgs. 12: 26-33.
- A. Calf-worship was set up at Dan and Bethel. Yet, the invisible Creator cannot be represented by a visible creature. See Ex. 20: 4—"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in the heaven above or on the earth beneath."
 - B. Shrines were set up on high places in violation of Deut. 12: 4-14.
 - C. Priests were appointed from all sorts of people in violation of God's command. See Ex. 28: 1; Lev. 8; Lev. 21: 1; Num. 3: 1-10; especially verse 10; Numbers 16 and 17.
 - D. An alternate to the Feast of Tabernacles was instituted. See Lev. 23: 33-44.
- ^{xcvi} While maintaining the forms of the worship of Jehovah, the people practiced all other types of idolatry in connection with their worship. They tried to combine the two, but wound up losing the true worship.

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- xcvii 2 Chron. 18: 1.
- xcviii See 2 Kgs. 8: 18, 26; 2 Chron. 21: 6; 22: 2, 10.
- xcix 1 Kgs. 22; 2 Chr. 18.
- c 2 Chron. 20: 35-36.
- ci 2 Kgs. 3.
- cii 2 Chron. 19: 2-3; 2 Chron. 20: 37.
- ciii 2 Chron. 21: 6; 22: 3-4.
- civ 2 Kgs. 11; 2 Chron. 22: 10-23: 21.
- cv 796-797 BC.
- cvi 2 Kgs. 14: 7; 2 Chron. 25: 11.
- cvii 2 Chron. 25: 14.
- cviii 736-716.
- cix 2 Kgs. 16; 2 Chron. 28; Is. 7.
- cx 745-727 BC.
- cxii 732 BC.
- cxiii 2 Kgs. 16: 10-16; 2 Chron. 28: 22-23.
- cxiiii 687-642 BC.
- cxv 2 Kgs. 21: 9-16; 2 Chron. 33: 9
- cxvi 2 Kgs. 21: 6
- cxvii 2 Kgs. 16: 3
- cxviii 1 Kgs. 15: 11-14. See also 2 Chron. 16: 7-14
- cxviiii 1 Kgs. 22: 41-43. See also 2 Chron. 19: 2-3
- cxix 2 Kgs. 12: 2-5. See also 2 Chron. 24: 17-25.
- cxix 2 Kgs. 15: 3. See also 2 Chron. 26: 16-20.
- cxxi 716-687.
- cxixii 640-608.
- cxixiii Hezekiah: 2 Kgs. 18-20; 2 Chron. 29-32; Is. 36-39.
Josiah: 2 Kgs. 22-23; 2 Chron. 34-35.
- cxixiv 2 Chron. 33: 30.
- cxixv 1 Kgs. 14: 25-28; 2 Chron. 12: 1-10. 925 BC.
- cxixvi 2 Chron. 21: 16-18.
- cxixvii 2 Chron. 21: 19.
- cxixviii 2 Chron. 25: 23-24; 2 Kgs. 14: 13-14.
- cxixix Is. 7; 2 Chron. 28: 1-8.
- cxixxx 2 Chron. 33: 11; See also:
Merrill Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), pp. 279-281.
- cxixxxi 2 Kgs. 23: 29-30; 2 Chron. 35: 20-24.
- cxixxxii 2 Kgs. 18: 21.
- cxixxxiii 2 Kgs. 17: 4-6.
- cxixxxiv 732 BC.
- cxixxxv 722 BC. 1 Kgs. 17.
- cxixxxvi Sennacherib defeats Merodachbalan in 702 BC.
Ashurbanipal sacks Babylon in 648 and Susa 639.
- cxixxxvii 681-668.
- cxixxxviii Ezra 4: 2.
- cxixxxix 1 Kgs. 17: 24-41; Ezra 4: 2.
- cxli 626-605 BC.
- cxli 2 Chron. 35: 20-24.
- cxlii Daniel 1: 1-7.
- cxliiii Macmillan, p. 104.
- cxliv Jeremiah 22: 13-17.
- cxlv Jer. 22: 18-19; 36: 30.
- cxlvi 2 Kgs. 24: 10-12; 2 Chron. 36: 9-10; Jer. 22: 24-30.
- cxlvii 2 Kgs. 24: 17.
- cxlviii Ezekiel 33: 21.
- cxlix 1 Sam. 4.
- cli Jer. 7.
- cli Ez. 12: 27.

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- clii Jer. 37-38.
- cliii Jer. 25: 11; 29: 10.
- cliv Jer. 27.
- clv Jer. 34: 6-7.
- clvi Pfeiffer, pp. 410-413.
- clvii Jer. 37: 5.
- clviii Jer. 37: 6-10.
- clix Jer. 52: 6.
- clx Deut. 28: 49-57; Ez. 5: 10.
- clxi 2 Kgs. 25: 9-21; 2 Chron. 36: 15-20; Jer. 52.
- clxii 556-539 BC.
- clxiii Macmillan, p. 107.
Unger, p. 300.
- clxiv Daniel 5: 30.
- clxv Isaiah 14: 21; Jeremiah 50; Habakkuk 2.
- clxvi Ezra 1.
- clxvii 586-539 BC.
- clxviii Micah 3: 12.
- clxix Jer. 5: 6.
- clxx Ezra 2: 64.
- clxxi Ezra 3: 1-6.
- clxxii Ezra 3: 10-13.
- clxxiii 522-486.
- clxxiv Ezra 5: 1.
- clxxv Deut. 7: 3-4.
- clxxvi Ezra 7: 1-5.
- clxxvii Ezra 7: 1, 458 BC.
- clxxviii Ezra 10: 3.
- clxxix Nehemiah 1: 11.
- clxxx Nehemiah 1: 1-3.
- clxxxi Nehemiah 2: 4-6.
- clxxxii Nehemiah 2: 19; 4: 1-3; 4: 7-23; 6: 1-8; 6: 10-13.
- clxxxiii Nehemiah 5: 1-12.
- clxxxiv Nehemiah 6: 15.
- clxxxv Nehemiah 8.
- clxxxvi Nehemiah 9.
- clxxxvii Nehemiah 10.
- clxxxviii Nehemiah 12: 27, 43.
- clxxxix Nehemiah 13: 6.
- cx Nehemiah 13: 6-9.
- cxci Nehemiah 13: 10-13.
- cxcii Nehemiah 13: 15-22.
- cxciii Nehemiah 13: 23-27.
- cxciv Nehemiah 13: 28-30.
- cxcv Nehemiah 13: 25.
- cx cvi Gal. 4: 4.
- cxvii Raymond Surburg, *Introduction to the Intertestamental Period* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), p. 10.
- cxviii Dan. 7.
- cxix 539-333 BC. From Cyrus' conquest of Babylon to the defeat of the Persian army at Issus.
- cc 336-323 BC. From Alexander's succession of Philip to his death.
- cci 323-283 BC.
- ccii 312-280 BC.
- cciii Aramaic paraphrases for the Hebrew Law and Prophets. At first produced orally, some were later written down. Cf. the Targum of Onkelos on the books of Moses, the Jerusalem Targum on the Pentateuch, and the Targum of Jonathon on the Prophets.
- cciv Ez. 8: 1.
- ccv The word "synagogue" is of Greek origin, meaning a gathering of people. The Hebrew word for such a gathering is *keneseth*. The word is used for the local congregation of Jews and also for the building in which the community meets for its services.
- ccvi Governing body of the synagogue community.

ccvii 175-164 BC.
ccviii 1 Macc. 1: 10-63; 2 Macc. 1-7: 42. See also Daniel 11: 32-35.
ccix Called the Akra.
ccx 165-161 BC.
ccxi Dec. 25.
ccxii Esther 9: 18-28. Celebrated in memory of the deliverance in Persia.
ccxiii 135-63 BC.
ccxiv 134-104 BC.
ccxv Charles Pfeifer, *Between the Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 114.
ccxvi Luke 2: 25.
ccxvii Luke 2: 38.
ccxviii Cf. the genealogies of Matt. 1 and Luke 3.
ccxix Micah 5: 2.
ccxx Luke 2: 2-3.
ccxxi Is. 9:6.
ccxxii Ex. 13: 2, 11; Lev. 12: 8.
ccxxiii According to Herod's will, Archelaus was to be king of Judea (including Samaria and Idumea). Herod Antipas was to be tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and Herod Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis and adjacent regions.
ccxxiv Luke 2: 41-52.
ccxxv Malachi 3: 1 and 4: 5.
ccxxvi Is. 40: 3.
ccxxvii Luke 1: 26.
ccxxviii Luke 3: 23.
ccxxix Matt. 3: 13-17; Mark 1: 9-11; Luke 3: 21-22.
ccxxx John 2: 13-3: 21.
ccxxxi John 3: 22.
ccxxxii John 3: 23.
ccxxxiii John 5.
ccxxxiv John 7.
ccxxxv John 7: 17-39.
ccxxxvi John 8.
ccxxxvii John 9.
ccxxxviii John 10: 22-39.
ccxxxix John 10: 40.
ccxl John 11: 18.
ccxli Matt. 21; Mark 11; Luke 19: 28-44; John 12: 12-19.
ccxlii Mark 11: 11.
ccxliii Mark 11: 12-14.
ccxliv Matt. 21: 12-13; Mark 11: 15-17; Luke 19: 45-46.
ccxlv Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21.
ccxlvi Romans 6: 23a.
ccxlvii Matt. 26: 25; John 13: 26-27.
ccxlviii Matt. 26: 31; Mark 14: 27-31; Luke 22: 31-34; John 13: 31-38.
ccxlix Matt. 26: 17-30.
cccl Mark 14: 12-26.
cccli Luke 22: 7-23.
ccclii 1 Cor. 11: 23-26
cccliii John 13-17.
cccliv Luke 23: 6-12.
ccclv Matt. 27: 25.
ccclvi Acts 7.
ccclvii Acts 8: 1-3.
ccclviii Acts 8: 1.
ccclix Matt. 24.
ccclx AD 395-638.
ccclxi AD 1099-1291.
ccclxii Is. 2: 1-5; Micah 4: 1-5; Romans 11: 26, etc.
ccclxiii 1 Peter 3: 10.

cclxiv Rev. 21: 19-21.

cclxv Rev. 21: 27.