

THE VOICE OF THE LORD - Old Testament

PART 2 The HISTORICAL BOOKS



INTRODUCTION *It is advisable first to read the Preface in Part 1.

Part 2 starts with the book of Joshua, classified in the Hebrew Canon as the first of the Former Prophets. The Historical Books (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther) cover many centuries; the Lord speaking through prophets or Seers by His Spirit to kings, priests, leaders, the people of Israel and also to the Gentile nations. As in the Pentateuch, the Study reveals the purposes of God's loving heart and His deep longing for fellowship with restored Mankind redeemed through the prophesied coming of the Messiah. The Messianic promise is a constant theme throughout bringing a message of hope and blessing. Again, in this Study only an outline of *The Voice of the Lord* (text in red italics) can be conveyed.

May you hear the power of His voice as in Creation and the gentle whisper of that still small voice,

The voice of the Lord is very powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. Psalm 29: 4

Sing praises to Him who rides upon the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold, He sends forth His voice, His mighty voice. Psalm 68: 33

He shall call upon Me and I will answer him. Psalm 91: 15a

JOSHUA

Read Joshua 1: 1 - 9

After the death of Moses, according to *The Voice of the Lord*, Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom for Moses had laid his hands on his loyal servant. The Israelites listened to their new leader and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Joshua 1: 5b

Have not I commanded you? Be strong, vigorous and very courageous. Be not afraid, neither be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1: 9

Read Joshua 3: 14 - 17



The conquest of Canaan began with God's command to cross the River Jordan. As at the Red Sea, the crossing of the Jordan was equally miraculous. With the Ark of the Covenant on the shoulders of the priests leading the way to stand in the middle of the Jordan, the Israelites crossed over on dry ground - even though at harvest the river was always in flood. It was not until the obedient priests took steps forward into that impassable current, putting their faith into action, that God worked the impossible by stopping the river's flow.

For a memorial of the event, the Lord commanded that twelve stones from the Jordan be set up at Gilgal where the Israelites first camped in Canaan. It was here the Covenant of Circumcision was renewed, where the people celebrated the Passover and ate unleavened bread after forty years for the Manna had ceased. Later, the *Feast of Harvest* was celebrated when the first harvest was reaped in Canaan, for there was no gathering of crops in the barren wilderness.

THE FALL OF JERICHO

Just as Moses had been commanded to take off his sandals at the Burning Bush, Joshua was similarly directed near Jericho by a heavenly Messenger, the Prince of the Lord's Host.

Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.

Joshua 5: 15



This Man, with a drawn sword in His hand (believed to be another Old Testament manifestation of the Son of God), gave Joshua the battle strategy for the conquest of Jericho.

Read Joshua Chapter 6

The wall shall fall down and the people shall go up, every man straight before him.

Joshua 6: 5b

Only Rahab, the prostitute, who had hidden the spies was spared together with her family.

The people were commanded not to take any gold, silver, bronze or iron plunder from Jericho for such articles were sacred to the Lord and to go into His treasury.

Read Joshua Chapter 7

Achan or Achor of the tribe of Judah disobeyed, causing the Israelites immediate trouble and defeat before the Amorites at Ai. In the Valley of Achor (trouble) a memorial pile of stones was heaped up - over Achan, to turn away the anger of the Lord.

*Only then was Joshua enabled to defeat the king of Ai. A heap of memorial stones was also built at Ai and another before the cave at Makkedah over 5 kings to mark Israel's conquests in the Promised Land.

Joshua 8:29b, 10: 27

*A memorial altar was built on Mt. Ebal on which Joshua engraved the words of God's Blessings and Curses on plastered stones, as Moses had commanded.

Deuteronomy 27: 1 – 26, 28: 1 - 14

Half the tribes stood on Mt. Gerizim (Blessings) and the other half on Mt. Ebal (Curses).

Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessings and the curses, all that is written in the Book of the Law.

Joshua 8: 34

THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND

During a long campaign of about 7 years, many kings, (except for the Gibeonites who made peace by deception), came out in battle against the Israelites. At *The Voice of the Lord*, these nations were to be destroyed because of their wickedness. The Israelites were successful and their enemies defeated for the Lord was with Joshua. Although not all the territory was conquered, Joshua allotted the land to the twelve tribes, with special towns for the Levites, of which six were Cities of Refuge. The Tabernacle was located at Shiloh.

There failed no part of any good thing the Lord had promised to the house of Israel; all came to pass.

Joshua 21: 45

Read Joshua 23: 14 – 24: 28

Joshua, now nearly 110 years old and towards the end of his life, recounted the covenant words of the Lord before all Israel and all its history starting with the life of Abraham. The Lord had given them the land of Canaan and they were to serve Him and put away foreign gods. The people answered:

The Lord our God we will serve; His voice we will obey.

Joshua 24: 24

Joshua wrote all the words the Lord had spoken in the Book of the Law. He set up a great stone, a memorial near the sanctuary of the Lord at Shechem, as a witness that God's voice had been heard by the people. After the death of Joshua there was no chosen leader divinely appointed to succeed him.

Israel served the Lord all the days of the elders who out lived Joshua. After that, He gave them judges until the prophet Samuel.

Acts 13: 20

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

During this time the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord, being unfaithful to the Sinai Covenant in serving other gods. The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel; and He said ;

This people have transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and have not listened to My voice.
Judges 2: 20

Invaders from the surrounding pagan nations therefore afflicted and plundered Israel causing the people repeatedly to cry to the Lord for deliverance. Unlike the Israelites who had occupied the Promised Land by conquest, the succeeding generations had no experience of warfare. To deliver the people from their oppressive enemies, the Lord raised up judges and the land had respite. Notable judges were Othniel (Caleb's younger brother), left-handed Ehud, Deborah - a prophetess, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. When the Judges ruled, the Lord was with them and Israel was victorious. At other times, when the Israelites did what was right in their own eyes, the Lord gave them up to their enemies.

Read Judges Chapter 6:

You have not obeyed My voice.

Judges 6: 10b

GIDEON

For seven years the Midianites plundered the land like locusts swarms. When the Israelites cried out to the Lord, He sent a prophet who rebuked them for not listening to *The Voice of the Lord*.

Then the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon (hiding in a wine press threshing wheat!) and spoke these words: *The Lord is with you, you mighty man of courage. Go in this your might and you shall save Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?*
Judges 6: 12, 14

Gideon did not feel at all mighty but at the Lord's command he destroyed that night the pagan altar. Thousands of fighting men rallied to his call to deliver the Israelites from Midian.

Read Judges chapter 7

The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel boast about themselves against Me, saying: My own hand has delivered me.

Judges 7: 2

The Lord said to Gideon, with the 300 men who lapped I will deliver you and give the Midianites into your hand. Let all the others return every man to his home. Judges 7: 7

The story of Gideon and his fleece is well-known. With the Spirit of the Lord upon him and encouraged by the dream he overheard, Gideon defeated the Midianites with only 300 fighting men; giving all the glory to God.

SAMSON

Read Judges Chapter 13

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife promising a son for she was barren. Later, when her husband saw the Angel, Manoah desired to know his name.

Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?

Judges 13: 18

Wonderful - one of the names of another Child, Who was surely to come, the promised Messiah. Samson was dedicated to the Lord from birth. As a Nazirite, his hair was never cut and in this obedience lay God-given strength. He judged Israel for twenty years, winning many astonishing victories against the Philistines. Sadly, he often did what was right in his own eyes. Eventually, beguiled by Delilah's relentless entreaties, his strength was lost - when she cut his hair! Samson was taken prisoner, blinded and forced to grind for the Philistines. When his hair had grown long again, he prayed to the Lord to remember him and for the return of his strength. On the day the Philistines held a sacrifice to their pagan god, Samson grasped the building's central pillars and won his greatest victory against the Philistines in his death, with the words:

Let me die with the Philistines!

Judges 16: 30a

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21: 25



THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

In the years of the Judges, Hannah, who was barren unlike Elkanah's other wife, prayed for the birth of a son. Such was her grief, she vowed at Shiloh before Eli, the High Priest, the child would be given to the Lord all his life. Her silent prayer was answered with the birth of Samuel. As a young child, Samuel came to minister to the Lord at Shiloh where the Ark of God rested, before Eli, who was old and nearly blind.

Now the boy Samuel grew and was in favour both with the Lord and with men. 1 Samuel 2: 26

By contrast, Eli had two wicked sons. A man of God came to Eli to condemn them, foretelling their death and the eventual demise of the Aaronic priesthood.

Those who honour Me I will honour, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

1 Samuel 2: 30b

GOD CALLS SAMUEL

Read 1 Samuel Chapter 3

The Lord came and stood and called as at other times, Samuel! Samuel!

Then Samuel answered, Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.

1 Samuel 3: 10

The Voice of the Lord then repeated the message of the man of God, thus confirming Samuel as a prophet. The word of the Lord soon came true with the capture of the Ark by the Philistines and the death of Eli's two sons in the battle. The news of this dreadful calamity caused the sudden deaths of Eli and his daughter-in-law in childbirth. The holy Ark of the Lord's Presence only remained in Philistia for seven months - before being brought back miraculously to Israel! The Ark of the Covenant caused such awesome fear on its return, that it took 20 years before the Israelites repented and Samuel could offer sacrifices and cry to the Lord for the people against the Philistines.

The Lord thundered with a great voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel.

1 Samuel 7: 10b

Read 1 Samuel Chapter 8

Samuel, as Prophet and Seer, judged Israel for many years but his sons as judges did not follow the Lord. The Israelites, therefore, asked Samuel to appoint a king to rule them like the surrounding nations. Their request displeased the Lord and Samuel but God answered Samuel's prayer –

Hearken to the voice of the people in all they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not be King over them.

1 Samuel 8: 7



SAUL IS ANOINTED THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL

Read 1 Samuel 9 - 10: 1

When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord told him, There is the man of whom I told you. He shall have authority over My people.

1 Samuel 9: 17

After Samuel anointed Saul, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he prophesied.

Read 1 Samuel 10: 17 – 25

Samuel said to all the people, Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that none like him is among all the people?

And all the people shouted and said, Long live the king!

1 Samuel 10: 24

Read 1 Samuel 12: 6 – 25

Samuel rehearsed Israel's history to the people and their evil in asking for a king.

If you will fear the Lord and serve Him and hearken to His voice and not rebel against His commandment, and if both you and your king will follow the Lord your God, it will be good!

1 Samuel 12: 14

But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king shall be swept away.

1 Samuel 12: 25

Stand still and see this great thing the Lord will do before your eyes now.

Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call to the Lord and He will send thunder and rain; then you shall know your wickedness is great in the sight of the Lord in asking for a king for yourselves.

1 Samuel 12: 16, 17

Samuel's words from the Lord were vindicated before all the people.



THE LORD REJECTS SAUL AS KING

All the years of Saul's reign there was war with the Philistines.

* Saul offered the burnt offering when he failed to wait for Samuel to offer sacrifices before the battle; thus disobeying the commandment of the Lord. Read 1 Samuel 13: 12 - 14

Now your kingdom shall not continue; the Lord has sought out (David) a man after his own heart. 1 Samuel 13: 14a

* Saul failed to destroy all the Amalekites (Esau's line) and their possessions.

Has the LORD as great a delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.'

1 Samuel 15: 22, 23b

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID AS KING



Read 1 Samuel Chapter 16

Samuel anointed David, the shepherd boy and youngest son of Jesse, being chosen by the Lord.

The Lord said to Samuel – Arise, anoint him; this is he. 1 Samuel 16: 12b

Then, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David.

DAVID KILLS THE GIANT - GOLIATH

Read 1 Samuel Chapter 17

David prevailed against Goliath with a stone in a sling because –

The battle is the Lord's.

1 Samuel 17: 47b

Saul became jealous of David who had to escape because his life was threatened even though David always remained loyal.



In time the prophet Samuel died.

Also, both Saul and his son Jonathan, beloved by David, were slain in battle on Mt. Gilboa where Israel was defeated by the Philistines.

Saul died because he was disobedient to the commandment of the Lord concerning the Amalekites. He was unfaithful to the Lord and even consulted a medium (the witch of Endor) for guidance prior to the battle.

KING DAVID

According to the word of the Lord, David became King, first over Judah at Hebron for 7 1/2 years and then over the ten northern tribes of Israel for 33 years, ruling for forty years.

The Lord said to David -

You shall feed My people Israel, and be a prince over them.

2 Samuel 5: 2b

You will shepherd My people Israel and you will become their ruler.

1 Chronicles 11: 2b

The Lord was with David and he became very powerful. He was successful in battle wherever he went because the Lord fought for him against the Philistines and other surrounding enemies – Moabites, Syrians, Amalekites and Edomites. David captured the Jebusite fortress of Zion which became his royal capital (Jerusalem) known as the City of David, where he built his palace. David was a man of war but he truly longed for peace in Israel and the fighting to cease.

Read 2 Samuel Chapter 6:1 - 19

Acknowledging the Lord as the true King of Israel, David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. His first attempt failed. David learned the severe lesson of reverence for God's holiness when the Ark was borne on a cart drawn by oxen and not on the shoulders of the Levites. Three months later the Ark was carried according to God's word; and brought into Jerusalem with great rejoicing; David dancing with joy before the Lord.

THE LORD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

Read 2 Samuel Chapter 7:1-17

David intimated to the prophet Nathan, his intention to build a temple for the Ark of the Lord in place of the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle).

Next day, *The Voice of the Lord* through Nathan, announced that David would not be the one to build God's temple because he had been a man of war and had shed much blood. Instead, in an unconditional covenant God would build David an everlasting house and throne, a royal dynasty.

He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

2 Samuel 7: 13

This promise referred to David's son Solomon. In the New Testament the promise was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, when God would dwell in the hearts of His people.

DAVID'S SIN

David was *a man after God's own heart* except in the matter of his adulterous relationship with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, followed by the contrived death of Uriah in battle.

Read 2 Samuel 12: 1 - 14

After David's response to Nathan's parable, came these words of condemnation –

You are the man! 2 Samuel 12: 7a

Nathan pronounced God's judgement on David for he had seriously failed to shepherd the people; but unlike Saul, David acknowledged his sin.

He prayed and fasted to be forgiven and for the life of his sick baby son to recover.

David received God's forgiveness but Bathsheba's child died after 7 days.

This was the first of many tragic events in David's family concerning his sons, all reflecting his sin, according to the judgement of the Lord.

Read 2 Samuel 21: 1 - 14

The Lord's judgement came on Israel with a famine lasting three years, because the covenant with the Gibeonites had been broken during Saul's reign. Furthermore, many Israelites had sided with Absalom, David's eldest son, when he rebelled in an attempt to replace his father as king.



Read 2 Samuel 24: 10 – 25, 1 Chronicles 21:1-27

Then there was David's disobedience of pride when he came to number his fighting men.

Through Gad, David's seer, because sin is so serious in God's sight, came the word of the Lord to the conscience-stricken king.

I hold over you three choices; select one of them, so I may bring it upon you. 2 Samuel 24: 12

David chose to fall into the merciful hands of the Lord rather than man.

When the pestilence reached Jerusalem, David prayed for his people when he saw the awesome sight of the destroying angel. At the word of the Lord through Gad, David bought the threshing floor and the oxen from Araunah, the Jebusite. There David built an altar for a burnt offering, so the sword in the hand of the destroying angel was refrained and the plague ceased.

Read 1 Chronicles 22: 6 - 10

Although it was in David's heart to build on this same site in Jerusalem a Temple for the Ark of the Covenant, the word of the Lord came to him saying:

You shall not build a house to My Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. 1 Chronicles 22: 8b

Instead his son, Solomon, was to build the Temple. David could only prepare for its building.



David was *the sweet psalmist of Israel* with many of his songs, prayers and praises recorded in the Book of Psalms. As a man after God's own heart, David trusted in the Lord's care and providence, as the well-known words of the Good Shepherd Psalm 23 reveal.

During his reign, David committed grievous sins, but unlike King Saul he repented and listened to *The Voice of the Lord* and awaited God's answer to his prayers.

My prayer is to You, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the multitude of Your mercy and the abundance of Your loving-kindness hear me, and in the truth and faithfulness of Your salvation answer me. Psalm 69: 13

A PSALM OF DAVID

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders.

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; yes, the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

The voice of the Lord splits and flashes forth forked lightning.

The voice of the Lord makes the wilderness tremble; the Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord makes the hinds bring forth their young, and His voice strips bare the forests, while in His temple everyone is saying, Glory! Psalm 29: 3 – 5, 7 - 9

I (the Lord) will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Psalm 32: 8

At the end of King David's life, his last words reveal a listening ear to *The Voice of the Lord*.

The Spirit of the Lord spoke in me and His word was upon my tongue. 2 Samuel 23: 2

Before the death of David, Solomon was declared King by his father, when Adonijah, David's eldest surviving son, made a failed attempt to seize the throne.

According to *The Voice of the Lord*, Solomon's extensive kingdom was firmly established.

His reign was one of peace, great wealth and royal magnificence.

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Read I Kings 3: 5 - 15

At Gibeon Solomon heard *The Voice of the Lord* one night in a dream –

Ask what I shall give you.

I Kings 3: 5b

Solomon asked the Lord for an understanding heart and mind to rule Israel.

Behold, I have done as you asked. I have given you a wise, discerning mind, so that no one before you was your equal, nor shall any arise after you equal to you.

I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honour, so that there shall not be any among the kings equal to you all your days.

1 Kings 3: 12, 13

Read 1 Kings 4: 29 - 34

The Israelites revered Solomon, the wisdom of God being endued upon him. Many visitors from surrounding countries, including the Queen of Sheba, came to Jerusalem to hear his wisdom.

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD

Thus said *The Voice of the Lord* in His promise to King David –

Your son whom I will set on your throne in your place shall build the house to My name and Presence.

1 Kings 5: 5b

Solomon was urged by the Lord to follow all his decrees and obey his commandments for this promise to David to be fulfilled.

I will dwell among the Israelites and will not forsake My people Israel.

1 Kings 6: 13

SOLOMON BRINGS THE ARK TO THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD

Read 1 Kings 8: 1 - 11

After offering sacrifices, when the ark was positioned in the Holy of Holies and the priests withdrew, the Shekinah cloud of the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

Before all the people Solomon praised the Lord for fulfilling all His promises to his father, David.

Read 1 Kings 8: 22 - 61

In his prayer of dedication, Solomon knelt and asked the Lord to hear the prayers of repentance made to this place and forgive the sins of His covenant people. On that same day, the king with all the people offered sacrifices and dedicated the Temple of the Lord.



SOLOMON AGAIN HEARS THE VOICE OF THE LORD

Read 1 Kings 9: 1 – 9, 2 Chronicles 7: 12 – 22 (verses 13 – 15 are unique to Chronicles)

The Lord having heard Solomon's prayer, promised to keep His word to David and establish his royal throne forever. God's voice warned Solomon and people not to forsake the Lord and worship other gods. *The Voice of the Lord* uttered both severe warning and gracious promise.

**Then I will cut off Israel from the land, and this house I have hallowed for My Name I will cast from My sight. And Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all the peoples.*

1 Kings 9: 7

**If My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves, seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land.*

2 Chronicles 7: 14

Disastrously for Israel, King Solomon, whose wisdom exceeded all others, loved many foreign wives and concubines and failed to follow the Lord with all his heart in his latter years.

After Solomon's death the Kingdom was divided.

THE TWO KINGDOMS

Read 1 Kings 11: 28 - 43

In the reign of his son, Rehoboam, the Kingdom was divided into the larger Northern Kingdom of Israel (Samaria) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah ruled by the House of David's line in Jerusalem - *the city where I have chosen to put My name.* 1 Kings 11: 36b

The word of the Lord, as prophesied by Ahijah the Shilonite, came true when, Jeroboam, one of Solomon's officers became King over the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom. To establish his kingdom, Jeroboam set up two idolatrous golden calves at Bethel and in Dan to prevent the people needing to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem. The Lord through the prophet Ahijah condemned these sins of Jeroboam and foretold the fall of his dynasty. The sins of Jeroboam were repeated by the kings of Israel, one dynasty after another doing evil in the sight of the Lord. God's voice through the prophet Jehu, foretold the destruction of the house of King Baasha who also caused the people of Israel to sin against the Lord. Israel's King Ahab married Jezebel and sinned more than his predecessors. By contrast most of the kings of Judah, did what was right in the sight of the Lord but even they were not devoted to the Lord as their forefather, King David.

ELIJAH

Read 1 Kings Chapter 17

Elijah the Tishbite prophesied to Ahab drought for three years. During this time of both famine and danger, Jezebel, daughter of the King of Sidon and a Baal worshipper, was killing the prophets of the Lord. Many of them were in hiding. During the famine, Elijah was guided and miraculously provisioned by the Lord. He was sent to drink from the brook Kerith and was fed bread and meat by ravens, the meat probably flown in from the palace! When the brook dried up, the Lord sent Elijah to Sidon, where he was sustained by a poor widow woman, according to the word of the Lord.

The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land. 1 Kings 17: 14

THE PROPHET ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL

Read 1 Kings 18: 17 - 46

In the third year of the famine in Samaria, Elijah reappeared to Ahab and commanded him to summon all the prophets of Baal to Mt. Carmel.

Here the people were to choose between Baal and the worship of the Lord; choosing the god who answered by fire. Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord, even filling the surrounding trench with precious water. Only on the drenched sacrifice to the Lord did the fire fall and burn up the offering. That day the rain came, the prophets of Baal were destroyed and the people declared:

The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God! 1 Kings 18: 39

Read 1 Kings 19: 1 - 8

Although victorious, Elijah fled to a cave at Horeb in fear for his life from the wrath of Queen Jezebel.

ELIJAH HEARS THE VOICE OF THE LORD

Read 1 Kings 19: 9 - 21

In the cave at Horeb the word of the LORD came to Elijah and God said to him,:

'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

'Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.'

1 Kings 19: 9b, 11a

Throughout the Bible, *The Voice of the Lord* and His divine Presence are often revealed in fire, the sound of thunder, or a powerful whirlwind. In the days of Samuel, the Lord thundered with a great voice and the Philistines were defeated before the Israelites. However, to the depressed Elijah fleeing from the wicked threats of Jezebel, the Lord was not in the thunder, the wind, earthquake or fire - but only in the whisper of: *a still, small voice.* 1 Kings 19: 12b

When Elijah heard *The Voice of the Lord*, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went and stood in the mouth of the cave; and again came the same question followed by Elijah's same answer:

'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

1 Kings 19: 13b



THE VOICE OF THE LORD TO ELIJAH

Elijah was instructed to return to anoint –

Hazael - to be King of Syria.

Jehu - to be King of Israel.

Elisha - to succeed Elijah as prophet of the Lord.

Before Elijah obeyed, the Lord added these reassuring words concerning His promised Remnant –

Yet I will leave 7000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed (sacrificed to) him.

1 Kings 19: 18



ELIJAH TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN

Read 2 Kings 2: 1 - 15

Elisha became a loyal servant of his mentor, the older prophet. Like a son, Elisha received a double portion of the Lord's Spirit when he saw the chariot and horses of fire taking Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. As with Moses at the Red Sea and Joshua at the R. Jordan (when the Israelites crossed over on dry ground into the promised land of Canaan); the Jordan again miraculously divided twice - as first Elijah and Elisha on his return struck the water.

ELISHA

The spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha and he had a miraculous ministry.

As prophet of the Lord, Elisha spoke God's powerful word against the sins of kings and people. Only those kings of Israel and Judah who did right in the eyes of the Lord prospered according to God's word. Most of the kings of Israel of the Northern Kingdom did evil in the sight of the Lord. God's instructions given to Elijah at Horeb to anoint or more correctly - divinely appoint were carried out by Elisha.

Hazael - King of Syria.

Jehu - King of Israel.

The pronouncements of the true prophets, their predictions followed by fulfilments during these times, show the omnipotent power, judgement and mercy of God Almighty over nations, peoples, their kings and dynasties.

Even though Hazael, Jehu and Elisha were appointed by the Lord, these men were all used to rebuke and chastise Israel!

His ways past finding out!

Romans 11: 33

KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

KING JEHOSHAPHAT of Judah did right in the eyes of the Lord except in his unwise alliances with Israel. During his reign the people of Judah were instructed out of the Book of the Law and judges were appointed to administer in the fear of the Lord. Jehoshaphat became very powerful with great wealth and honour. He was allied to Israel through the marriage of his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Israel's wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel; and so became militarily involved in the battle of Ramoth Gilead. Israel's false prophets foretold success at Ramoth Gilead, but Jehoshaphat asked that a real prophet of the Lord should also be consulted.

Read 2 Chronicles 18: 12 - 27

Micaiah, the Lord's true prophet, answered with these final words

If you return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me. Hear, O people, everyone of you!

1 Kings 22: 28, 2 Chronicles 18: 27

KING AHAB, although in disguise, was killed at Ramoth Gilead. (King Ahab, Queen Jezebel and Ahab's dynasty died out according to the word of the Lord through Elijah).

Jehoshaphat was nearly killed at Ramoth Gilead and on his return to Jerusalem was rebuked by Jehu, the seer, for making an alliance with the wicked. Later in Jehoshaphat's reign, news arrived of a large army of Israel's enemies (Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites) coming to attack Judah.

Great fear struck King Jehoshaphat and he proclaimed a Fast throughout Judah. King and people sought help in prayer to the Lord before the Temple in Jerusalem.

Read 2 Chronicles 20: 1 - 30

Jehoshaphat's humble prayer of intercession was answered by *The Voice of the Lord* through Jahaziel, one of the Levites, with these words:

Be not afraid or dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

2 Chronicles 20: 15b

Read 2 Chronicles 21: 12 - 15

KING JEHORAM, Jehoshaphat's son (married to Athaliah), did much evil in the sight of the Lord, even murdering his brothers. In a letter from Elijah, the judgement of the Lord was pronounced against Jehoram - defeat and his death through severe sickness. Then, after the brief reign of his youngest son, AHAZIAH, his mother the wicked Athaliah ruled Judah for six years. To secure power, she destroyed Judah's royal family - except for Ahaziah's young son, Joash. He was rescued by Jehosheba, sister of Ahaziah and wife of the priest, Jehoiada, the young king's uncle. The child, JOASH, was kept hidden until he was crowned king at the age of seven through a military coup organized by Jehoiada, when Athaliah was killed. During his long reign, Joash did right in the eyes of the Lord, repairing the Temple and restoring the sacrifices, all the years of Jehoiada. When Joash forsook the Lord, Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, rebuked the king with these words as from the Lord:

Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper?

Because you have forsaken the Lord, he also has forsaken you.

2 Chronicles 24: 20b

At the command of the king, Zechariah was stoned to death for Joash had forgotten his uncle's kindness. The king's reign ended with defeat by the Syrians, his illness and murder.

His son AMAZIAH did right in the eyes of the Lord at first but later ignored God's word and was also slain. His 16 year old son, UZZIAH (also called by his personal name - Azariah), succeeded him. He was a great builder and had a long and powerful reign. Later in his reign, Uzziah became a leper because in pride he burned incense in the Temple, usurping the office of priest. In the year Uzziah died, the ministry of the prophet Isaiah began with his visionary Call when he heard *The Voice of the Lord*.

CONCLUSION

Read 2 Kings 17: 5 – 23

The gracious warnings of the Lord as given by the prophets, seers and men of God were ignored. King and people forsook the Lord and worshipped the gods of the surrounding enemy nations.

They served idols, of which the Lord had said to them:

You shall not do this thing.

Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the Law which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.

2 Kings 17: 12b, 13b

First the Northern Kingdom of Israel was defeated and the people deported into exile by the Assyrians under Sennacherib in 701 B.C.

A century and a half later in 586 B.C. Judah went into exile in Babylon when Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar.

Israel and Judah went into exile because of their disobedience and unfaithfulness to the Lord. They did not listen to *The Voice of the Lord*; but engaged in forbidden idolatry in their worship of the pagan gods of the surrounding nations.

The prophecies concerning the predicted fall of the two kingdoms, the destruction of Jerusalem and the events in history of the near and distant future are continued in the next section.

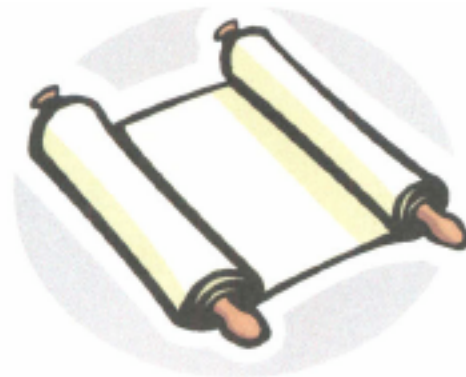
THE MAJOR PROPHETS

*ISAIAH

*JEREMIAH

*EZEKIEL

*DANIEL



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