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BIBLE HISTORY

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT.

BY THE

REV. COLEMAN IVENS,

CURATE OF NEW RADNOR, SOUTH WALES.



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## PREFACE.

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IN the teaching of the Holy Scriptures in Elementary Schools, there has not been hitherto available a manual of sufficient fulness to grasp the leading features of the narrative, and sufficiently cheap to allow of general purchase or distribution. The present work has been undertaken with a view to present, in a connected form, the facts and incidents that are contained with much greater amplification in the various books of the Bible. If such works as these are allowed by the teacher to supersede the study of the Bible itself, they will do more harm than good; as aids to Bible reading they are valuable, as substitutes for it they become mischievous. I have endeavoured, in compiling this Bible History, to condense the narrative on a uniform scale—not treating one portion with unnecessary fulness, and unduly abridging another. The short paragraphs into which the chapters are divided will render the work more useful to the student and scholar.

C. IVENS.

*November, 1874.*

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B.C. 4004-1635—A Period of 2369 years.

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# OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

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## PART I.

From the Creation of the World to the death of Joseph.  
B.C. 4004-1635—A Period of 2369 years.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN.

**1. The Creation of the World.**—The history of the Old Testament begins with the creation of the world by Almighty God. The earth was at first empty, and without form, and its surface was hidden by the darkness which prevailed around. The work of creation occupied six days, each day's separate task being as follows:—

On the First Day was created Light.

On the Second Day, the Firmament, or the Atmosphere which surrounds the earth.

On the Third Day, Dry Land, Herbs, and Trees, and Water and Land were separated.

On the Fourth Day, the Sun, Moon, and Stars.

On the Fifth Day, Fishes and Birds.

On the Sixth Day, Animals and Man.

The creation of man, which took place on the sixth day, is more particularly described by the sacred writer. The first man Adam was made in the image of God, out of the dust of the ground. He was appointed the head of all creation, and all other creatures were to be in subjection to him. For his food, herbs and the fruit of trees were given him.

2. **Institution of the Sabbath.**—On the seventh day God rested from the work of creation, and sanctified it as a Sabbath, or Day of Rest. It is most likely in allusion to this, the first institution of the Sabbath, that, in the giving of the Ten Commandments, the Israelites were commanded to *remember* to keep holy the Sabbath day. The word “remember” seems to indicate that the command was previously in force.

3. **Adam placed in the Garden of Eden.**—Adam was placed by God after his creation in the Garden of Eden, a place situated most probably in Armenia, a country of Asia. A river watered the garden, which, as it flowed onward, was parted into four branches. Two of these branches are unknown, but the Hiddekel is generally agreed to be the Tigris, and the Euphrates is the river that is at present known by that name. The garden was full of trees suited to please the eye, and satisfy the hunger; and it was the occupation of Adam to dress it and to keep it. We are told the names of two of the trees: the Tree of Life, which was in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. As a test of the obedience of Adam, the fruit of this latter tree was strictly forbidden him, under pain of death. The command ran: “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”

4. **Adam provided with a wife.**—Taking pity on the loneliness of the man whom He had made, God now determined to provide Adam with a wife. He therefore caused him to fall into a deep sleep, and while in this state, took from him one of his ribs, out of which He made a woman, who was named Eve, and who became the mother of the human race. Thus we see that the state of marriage was instituted before the Fall, in the time of man's innocency. The first human pair were naked in the Garden of Eden; but, owing to their innocency, they had no feelings of shame. Shame is closely bound up with guilt; but as yet their natures had  
in of sin.

5. **The Fall of Adam and Eve.**—The Fall of Man took place through the fraud and malice of the serpent. This creature, “~~more subtil than any beast of the field,~~” told Eve she was mistaken in supposing that death would be the result of her disobedience; and that upon eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, her own position and that of her husband would be exalted to that of gods, knowing good and evil.” Led away by his craft, influenced by ambition, and trusting to the evidence of her own senses, Eve broke the law by eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and persuaded her husband to be a sharer of her sin. For thus bringing on our first parents the penalty of spiritual death, Satan, whose mouthpiece on this occasion the serpent was, is denounced by our Lord as “a murderer from the beginning” (John viii. 44). The first result of the crime was a feeling of shame, which led Adam and Eve to hide themselves from God’s presence, among the trees of the garden. Being called from his hiding-place, Adam confessed his shame, which led to a further confession of his disobedience. He excused this as being done at the entreaty of his wife; she, on her part, throwing the blame on the serpent. All the three parties to the crime were punished according to the varying degrees of their guilt. The serpent was cursed above all cattle, doomed henceforth to crawl on his belly, and to feed on dust. Eve was to be in subjection to her husband, and to bring forth children in sorrow. Adam was condemned in the sweat of his brow to eat his bread, forced with difficulty from the earth, which, on his account, was stricken with a curse. Still, in the midst of this sin and punishment, the first faint gleam of hope appears, the promise of a Redeemer who would set right this great wrong. As a part of the punishment of the serpent, it was announced: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed, and her Seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Genesis iii. 15). The Seed of the woman here referred to is Jesus Christ, Who, dying on the Cross for our redemption, bruised the head or power of the

serpent; the devil, in causing Him this suffering, bruising, as it were, His heel.

**6. Adam and Eve provided with Clothing.**—To hide the shame of the guilty pair, God now made them coats of skins, which must have been from animals slain in sacrifice, as animal food was not yet permitted. Thus, immediately after the Fall began the ritual of the atonement, the shadowing forth of the means to be taken to effect the recovery. Lest in their guilty state, Adam and Eve should eat of the Tree of Life, and attain an immortality of misery, they were driven out of the Garden of Eden, the entrance of which was guarded with "cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life."

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

1. State the work done on each of the six days of creation.
2. What was at this period given to the human race for food?
3. What two institutions affecting man's civil and religious life, were ordained before the Fall?
4. What reason is there for supposing that the custom of sacrifice had its origin in Eden?

---

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE HISTORY OF ADAM'S DESCENDANTS—THE WICKEDNESS OF THE HUMAN RACE—THE FLOOD.

**1. Cain and Abel: The First Murder.**—Cain and Abel were the two sons of Adam and Eve. Cain was employed in cultivating the ground; Abel was a keeper of sheep. Each of them brought offerings to God: Cain of the fruits of the ground, Abel of the firstlings of his flock. While God accepted Abel's offering, for some reason which is not stated, He rejected the offering of

Cain, who became so angry that shortly afterwards, in a fit of jealousy, he murdered his brother. Thus early do we see the sad fruits of the Fall; and the wickedness of men went on increasing until the earth was filled with similar acts of violence. For this crime, Cain was compelled to wander over the earth, "a fugitive and a vagabond;" but God set a mark upon him, to protect him from the vengeance of men.

**2. The Posterity of Cain.**—Being thus driven out from the home of his family, Cain went into the land of Nod, where he built a city, which he called Enoch, after the name of his eldest son. Some of his descendants are famous as the inventors of useful arts; thus Jubal invented musical instruments, and Tubal-Cain was the first smith. But they united with great powers of mind, great moral depravity; for Lamech was guilty of the second murder, and also commenced the practice of polygamy, *i. e.*, of having more wives than one.

**3. The Family of Seth.**—After the death of Abel, God gave Adam another son, who was called Seth. His children were more righteous than the family of Cain, and amongst them was Enoch, a good man, who, when he was 365 years old, was taken to heaven without dying. Methuselah, another of Seth's descendants, is famous as being the oldest man that ever lived; he died at the age of 969 years. The ages of men before the flood were much longer than they were after that time, thus Adam lived 930 years, Methuselah, 969 years, and Noah, the grandson of Methuselah, 950 years. After the flood, the ages of the patriarchs were as follows, Abraham, 175 years, Isaac, 180 years, Jacob, 147 years, and Joseph, 110 years.

**4. Noah directed to build an Ark.**—As men began to multiply on the earth, they became exceedingly wicked. The sons of God (the family of Seth), married the daughters of men (the family of Cain), and from this union a race of giants sprung whose crimes filled the earth with violence. God therefore determined to destroy the world by a flood of water, saving only Noah and his

family alive. In order to provide for his safety, Noah was directed to build an ark of gopher, or cypress wood, which, by floating on the surface of the water, would rise to as great a height as the flood attained. The length of the ark was 300 cubits, the breadth 50 cubits, and the height 30 cubits, which, taking the cubit at 18 inches, would make it 450 feet long, 75 feet broad, and 45 feet high. It was overlaid with bitumen or pitch, within and without, in order to keep out the water, and had an upper, middle, and lower story. Seven couples of clean beasts, fit for sacrifice, were placed in it, while of animals accounted unclean, two couples were sufficient. Noah was about 120 years in building the ark, during which time, we are told in the New Testament, he was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter ii. 5), warning men and women of the dreadful judgment which was about to overtake them for their sins. The world, however, gave no heed to his words, for our Lord tells us, "they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day Noe entered the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all" (Luke xvii. 27).

5. **The Flood.**—The persons saved in this dreadful deluge were Noah and his wife, with his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their three wives, making in all eight men and women. The rain fell without stopping for forty days and nights, and, in the expressive language of Scripture, "the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." The waters increased, and still as they mounted higher, the ark kept floating on their surface. All men and women, animals and birds, except those that were in the ark were drowned. At last the flood of waters rose to such a height that the tops of the mountains were covered, and even then it went on ascending, till it had reached a further height of 15 cubits. For five months, this wide, dreary waste of desolating waters prevailed, but after that time the flood began to subside, and, on the seventh month, the ark rested on one of the mountains of Ararat. The waters went on continually decreas-

ing, till, on the tenth month, the tops of the mountains were visible, and forty days afterwards, anxious to learn how much lower they had sunk, Noah opened the window of the ark, and sent forth a raven and a dove. The raven, being a strong bird, devouring any coarse food which it finds, did not return; but the gentle dove, finding the water still covering the surface of the earth, made its way back to the ark, and Noah, opening the window, drew it in. Seven days after, the dove was again sent forth, and this time it returned with an olive-leaf in its mouth; again dismissed, a week later, it returned no more. Noah being now assured that the earth was dry and habitable, came out of the ark, and released its inmates. His first act was to build an altar to God, on which he offered sacrifices of every clean bird and beast. God was pleased with this religious act, and promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood. "Whilst the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease."

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

1. What members of the family of Cain were the inventors of useful arts?
2. State the ages of Adam, Methuselah, and Noah. Compare with them the ages of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
3. What distinction was made between clean and unclean beasts in preserving the different kinds of animals in the ark?
4. What particulars concerning Noah and the flood do we learn from the New Testament?
5. How long was Noah and his family shut up in the ark?

## CHAPTER III.

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THE AGE OF NOAH—THE TOWER OF BABEL—THE CALL  
OF ABRAHAM.

**1. Three new Precepts given to Noah.**—Noah thus became the second founder of the human race, and to him, as to Adam, a short code of laws was given for guidance. He was commanded to be fruitful, so that the human race might again overspread the earth, and the government of the animal creation was placed in his hands. But three new precepts were given him, which do not appear before in the history of the world, viz:—

1. The animal creation were allowed to him for food. God had previously given to Adam only herbs and trees for his meat.

2. Murder was strictly forbidden under pain of the Divine vengeance, and its penalty was to be death.

3. Civil authority, or the authority of men to govern one another, was recognised in the case of murder. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

**2. God's Covenant with Noah.**—The promise which God made to Noah, when he offered his sacrifice after coming out of the ark, was afterwards solemnly renewed in the form of a covenant. In this covenant, God made a declaration that the human race should never again be destroyed by a flood. The rainbow was appointed to be a perpetual sign of this covenant, so that when it appeared, men might call to mind the promise, and be comforted. The poet Campbell, in his verses on the rainbow, thus alludes to its connection with God's covenant with Noah.

"When o'er the green undeluged earth,  
Heaven's covenant thou didst shine,  
How came the world's gray fathers forth  
To watch thy sacred sign!



“ And, faithful to its sacred page,  
 Heaven still rebuilds thy span,  
 Nor lets the type grow pale with age  
 That first spoke peace to man.”

**3. Noah's Prophecy on his Sons.**—Noah now began to be a husbandman, and, having planted a vineyard, drank of the wine to such an extent that he lay drunken and exposed within his tent. His youngest son, Ham (in company, probably with his own son Canaan), saw his father in this state, and instead of hiding his shame, went and told it to his brothers, Shem and Japheth. They, with feelings of true reverence, hastened to cover their father with a garment, turning their eyes from him as they approached him. When he awoke from his stupor, Noah learnt the conduct of his youngest son, and pronounced on him and his posterity a curse, giving the two others a blessing. The prophecies run thus:—

1. “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.”

2. “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem (implying that special religious privileges should be bestowed upon him), and Canaan shall be his servant.”

3. “God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.” (By the phrase “he shall dwell in the tents of Shem,” is probably meant “he shall be a sharer in his spiritual privileges.” Thus the Christian religion has come to the descendants of Japheth through the family of Shem).

**4. The Tower of Babel.**—Soon after the death of Noah, the three families of the human race left the mountain district of Armenia, and settled in the plain of Shinar, *i.e.*, the tract of country between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Here they made an agreement to establish one great empire, which should have for its population the whole human race, and, as a visible sign of unity, they began to build a city and a tower whose top might reach unto heaven. As this was an attempt to frustrate God's plan for the replenishing of the earth, He made them cease from building the tower by confounding their

language, so that they could not understand one another's speech. The unfinished city was therefore called "Babel," which is a word signifying "confusion." We read in Genesis xi. 25, that it was in the days of Peleg that the earth was divided, so that this event probably took place about three hundred years after the flood.

**5. The Dispersion of the Nations.**—Speaking generally, the descendants of Shem settled in Asia, the descendants of Ham in Africa, and the descendants of Japheth in Europe. But while it is true that Europe was peopled with the posterity of Japheth, and Africa with the race of Ham, it should be borne in mind that the continent of Asia was divided between the three races. Palestine, Arabia, and India, were colonized by the descendants of Ham, though afterwards, the Israelites, who were of the race of Shem, expelled them from Palestine. A large portion of Central Asia was occupied by the children of Japheth, while the south-western district, including the countries of Asia Minor, Syria, Assyria, and Persia, was peopled by the descendants of Shem. Up to this time, the history of the Bible has dealt with the fortunes of the whole human race; now it becomes limited to the history of one particular family of the race of Shem, the family of Abram.

**6. The call of Abram.**—Terah, the father of Abram, was ninth in descent from Shem, and his native country was Ur of the Chaldees. We learn from the Book of Joshua (Chapter xxiv. 2), that he served false gods, and most probably at this time the worship of God was dying out amongst men. God therefore determined to select one family, and of that family to make a nation, which should be a constant witness of pure and true religion amidst the surrounding idolatries, and from which also should come, in the fulness of time, the promised Seed. Two distinct *calls of Abram* are recorded in the Bible. The *first call* came to him while he was in his father's house at Mesopotamia (Nehemiah ix. 7, Acts vii. 2), and was obeyed by himself, his father Terah, his brother Nahor, and his nephew Lot. They left Ur of the

Chaldees, and came to Haran, or Charran, where Terah died, and Nahor settled. Here Abram received the *second call*, God promising to make of him a great nation, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. He bade him leave his present habitation, and journey onward to a land which God should show him. Following the divine direction, Abram, with his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot, travelled from Haran to Canaan, crossing on their way the great river Euphrates. From the fact that his original home was on the other side of the river, the Canaanites gave him the name of "Abram the Hebrew," i.e., "the man who came from the other side of the river," Abram was at this time seventy-five years old.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

1. What new laws were given to Noah after the flood?
2. What promise did God make in His covenant with Noah, and what was its sign?
3. Explain the expression in Noah's prophecy to Japheth, "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem."
4. From what passages does it appear that Abram received *two* calls to leave his country? Where was he at the first? Where at the second?

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### CHAPTER IV.

#### THE LIFE OF ABRAM IN CANAAN.

1. Abram builds two Altars in Palestine and sojourns in Egypt.—The journey of Abram through the land of Canaan was broken in two places, where he raised altars to God. The first of these places was Sichem, afterwards called Shechem, which was situated between two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. Here God appeared to him, and promised to give him the land in

which he now dwelt. The second place where he built an altar, was a mountain between Bethel and Ai. He afterwards continued his southward journey; but was soon compelled to take refuge in Egypt on account of a grievous famine. Here he persuaded Sarai his wife, who was a beautiful woman, to pretend she was his sister, fearing that otherwise the Egyptians would kill him in order to gain her for their king. The beauty of Sarai was reported to King Pharaoh, and on her account rich presents were made to Abram; but God plagued the Egyptian monarch with great plagues, and thus warned him of the sin he was about to commit. With a rebuke to Abram for his deception, Pharaoh dismissed him and his household from his kingdom. Abram returned to Palestine, and visited the second altar which he had erected, where he called on the name of the Lord.

**2. Separation of Abram and Lot.**—Abram was at this time "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold," and Lot, his nephew, had "flocks, and herds, and tents." A quarrel broke out between their herdsmen, which made it difficult for them to continue to live together in friendship. So Abram proposed that they should part, giving Lot the choice in which direction he would go. Lot chose that part of the country which was richest and best, the valley of Sodom, though the people who dwelt there were exceedingly wicked. Abram, thus left alone in a strange land, received a fresh assurance from God that his seed should possess the whole of it, and be as numerous as the dust of the earth. He then again commenced his journey southwards, and took up his residence at Mamre, the ancient name of Hebron, where he built his third altar to God. Abram continued to reside in the south of Palestine during the remainder of his life.

**3. Battle of four kings against five: Appearance of Melchizedek.**—While Abram was at Hebron, tidings reached him that Lot had been carried away captive from Sodom. The king of Sodom, with the kings of the four neighbouring cities of Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and

Zoar, had paid tribute for a period of twelve years to Chederlaomer, king of Elam or Mesopotamia. They now resolved to **throw off his yoke, upon which**, after subduing several nations east of the Jordan, he, with three kings in alliance with him, fought against them and utterly defeated them. The routed army fled, some falling into the slime pits with which the region abounds, and some escaping to the mountains. The four victorious kings plundered the cities of their vanquished enemies, and departed, carrying away among other captives Lot, the nephew of Abram. On hearing these tidings, Abram armed his 318 servants, and, assisted by his neighbours, Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner, pursued the four kings to Laish, in the extreme north of Palestine. Dividing his men into companies, he attacked his enemies by night, and defeated them, chasing them as far as Hobah, a place to the left of Damascus. He recovered the captives and the plunder, and departed homewards. As he came near to Hebron, he was met by a Canaanitish prince, Melchizedek, king of Salem, and priest of the most high God, who brought him bread and wine, and gave him a solemn blessing. Abram acknowledged his superiority by giving him a tenth part of all his goods. In the 110th Psalm, the priesthood of the Messiah is declared to be of the order of Melchizedek, and in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, Christ's priesthood is shown to be of this kind. The king of Sodom was willing that Abram should keep the plunder he had brought back, but the patriarch refused to receive any wealth from such a polluted source, consenting only that his friends who had accompanied him should receive their share of the spoil.

**4. Abram's Faith, Sacrifice, and Vision of Prophecy.**  
—At this period Abram's faith began to waver, and he complained to God, that, to all human appearances, his steward would be his heir. God solemnly assured him that he should yet have a son, and that his seed should be as numerous as the stars of heaven. "And he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis xv. 6). Asking for a sign

whereby he might be assured of the certainty of this, he was told to offer a special sacrifice. He watched the carcasses of the slain victims from morning to evening, to keep from them the birds of prey, and when the sun was going down, "a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him." In the vision that followed, it was made known to him that his seed should be strangers in a land not their own, where they should be afflicted 400 years. After that period, they should come into the land of Canaan, for the iniquity of the Amorites, the present inhabitants, was not yet full. In the darkness that followed the setting of the sun, Abram beheld a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp passing between the divided parts of the bodies of the victims, which was a token that the covenant was confirmed by God. Afterwards, the boundaries of the Land of Promise were pointed out; it was to extend from the river of Egypt on the south, to the great river, the river Euphrates, on the north-east. This prophecy received its fulfilment in the reign of Solomon, for the boundaries of Solomon's empire are those here specified.

**5. The Birth of Ishmael.**—Abram had been now ten years in the land of Canaan, and was without offspring. Sarai therefore gave her maid Hagar to her husband, and by her he had a son. But before the child was born, Hagar began to despise her mistress, who in return dealt so hardly with her maid, as to make her flee into the desert. While here the angel of God found her, and instructed her to go back to her mistress, encouraging her by the promise that she should shortly have a son, who should be "a wild man, whose hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him." Shortly after her return to Sarai, she gave birth to a son who was named Ishmael, a word signifying "God shall hear." Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

1. In what three places in Palestine did Abram build altars to God?
2. How did Abram recognise the superiority of Melchizedek? In what parts of the Old and New Testament is Christ's priesthood declared to be of the order of Melchizedek?
3. What particulars concerning his posterity were revealed to Abram in the vision of prophecy? In whose reign was the extent of territory promised to him attained?
4. State the character of Ishmael; what does the name Ishmael mean? How old was Abram when he was born?

## CHAPTER V.

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM IN CANAAN (*Continued*).

1. **The Institution of Circumcision.**—Abram was now ninety-nine years old, and as yet he had no son. God again appeared to him, and renewed His covenant with him, changing his name from Abram, which means "high father," to Abraham, "father of a multitude." On the same occasion, his wife's name was changed from Sarai, "my princess," to Sarah, "princess." The rite of circumcision was appointed as a sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his posterity. All the males in his house were to be circumcised, and children born afterwards when they were eight days old. By circumcision, Jewish children were admitted to God's covenant in the same way as Christian children are by the sacrament of baptism. At the same time, Abraham was promised that a year hence a son should be born to him, who was to be named Isaac, a word signifying "laughter."

2. **The visit of the Angels, and the destruction of Sodom.**—As Abraham was sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day under the oak near Hebron, he was visited by three strangers, whom he entertained with

great hospitality. These persons were of no less dignity than angels, and so the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* exhorts us "be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." One of the angels asking for his wife, announced that she would in a short time be the mother of a son, upon which Sarah, who was behind, laughed, not believing his statement. The speaker rebuked her for her want of faith, remarking, "is anything too hard for the Lord?" The three angels then rose up to go on their way, and while two departed on a journey to Sodom, one of them, the Angel of the covenant, remained talking with Abraham. He told Abraham of the dreadful guilt of the people of Sodom, and that He was come down to visit them with punishment for it. The patriarch, moved with pity, pleaded for the inhabitants of the doomed city, appealing to God to save it, if fifty, forty-five, forty, thirty, and at last, ten righteous men were found within its walls. God ceased not granting so long as Abraham continued asking; but the only good man in Sodom was "just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter ii. 7). The other two angels, in the meantime, had entered into Sodom, where they were entertained hospitably by Lot, who was, however, ignorant of their rank. Soon after, the wicked Sodomites demanded that the two strangers should be brought out to them, to be ill-treated at their pleasure; and Lot, failing to appease them, the angels exerted their power, and smote them, as they attempted to break open the door, with blindness. Then they hurriedly made known to Lot the dreadful errand on which they had come, bidding him inform his relations; but he was so overcome with terror and confusion, that "he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." As the morning began to dawn, the angels bade him hasten his departure, and, as he still lingered, they mercifully pushed him out of his house with his wife and family, charging them to escape for their lives to the mountains, and on no account to look behind them. At Lot's urgent entreaty,



one of the cities, Bela, or Zoar, was spared for him to flee into; but in their flight, his wife, looking behind her, was turned into a pillar of salt. A warning is hence given to irresolute Christians by our Lord in the gospels, "remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32). God then rained on the guilty cities fire and brimstone from heaven; and they were all four sunk in utter destruction. Lot, afraid to remain in Zoar, fled to the mountains, where two sons were born to him, Moab and Ben-Ammi, who were the ancestors of two powerful nations, the Moabites and the Ammonites.

**3. Abraham and Abimelech.**—Abraham, going to Gerar, came into the kingdom of Abimelech, and here he used the same deceit as he had practised in Egypt, by persuading his wife to say she was his sister. Abimelech would have taken her to be his own wife, but God warned him of the sin he was about to commit, telling him that Abraham was a prophet, whose prayers should obtain for him forgiveness. Abimelech then gave Abraham back his wife, rebuking him for having deceived him, and at the same time made him numerous presents. Afterwards, Abraham reproved Abimelech, because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had taken away. They settled their dispute by the side of a well, which was therefore called Beersheba (the well of the oath), "because there they swear both of them."

**4. The Birth of Isaac and the Expulsion of Hagar.**—While Abraham dwelt at Beersheba, his long-promised son Isaac was born, and was circumcised when he was eight days old. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son was born. He made a great feast at the weaning, at which Ishmael, who was fifteen years old, was caught mocking his infant brother. Sarah was very angry at this, and demanded that the bondwoman and her son should be thrust out. Abraham was grieved at this dissension in his household, but God told him to act according to Sarah's wish, saying, that while Ishmael should be the father of a great nation, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Hagar and Ishmael were therefore

sent away, and their provisions being soon spent, the mother placed her son under a shrub, retiring a short distance to avoid the pain of seeing him die of thirst. The cries of ~~the perishing outcasts~~ were heard in heaven, and an angel showed Hagar a well of water, at which she gave her son drink. He grew up in the wilderness, and became an archer. He was the father of twelve sons, who were the ancestors of Arabian tribes.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V.

1. State the meanings of Abram, Abraham, Sarai, Sarah, and Isaac.
2. What lesson does the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* draw from the visit of the three strangers to Abraham?
3. What powerful tribes, frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, were descended from Lot?
4. What does the name Beersheba mean? Why was it so called?
5. "Of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation." How was this promise fulfilled?

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### CHAPTER VI.

#### THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM IN CANAAN (*Concluded*).

1. **The Trial of Abraham's Faith.**—When Isaac had grown up into a young man, God commanded Abraham to offer him up for a burnt sacrifice in a mountain in the land of Moriah. This message, though so dreadful, Abraham did not hesitate to obey, so taking with him his son Isaac, and two young men, he set out on his journey. On the third day after he had left his home, he saw the place in the distance, so leaving the young men and the ass, he and his son went forward by themselves, Isaac bearing the wood on his back, and Abraham carrying the fire and the knife. Isaac, anxious to know what the sacrifice was to be, received the short but sufficient

answer that God would provide it. When they had reached the spot, Abraham built an altar, laid the wood in order, bound his son Isaac, and placed him upon it. But just as he was taking the knife in his hand to slay his son, God called to him out of heaven to stay, for the object of the command was attained, which was to make one more trial of his faith. Casting his eyes round, Abraham saw a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; this he offered up for a sacrifice in the place of his son. He therefore called the name of the place Jehovah-jireh, "the Lord will provide." God on this occasion solemnly renewed to him the promise of a numerous posterity, among whom should be One that would bless all the nations of the earth.

**2. Death and Burial of Sarah.**—Returning from the sacrifice upon Mount Moriah, Abraham went to his former dwelling at Beersheba. At the next point of the narrative we find him at Hebron, where Sarah died at the age of 127 years. She was buried in the Cave of Machpelah, which Abraham bought for 400 shekels of silver of Ephron the Hittite. It will be interesting here to notice the places where the chief persons of patriarchal history were buried. In the Cave of Machpelah were buried Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Rachel, dying near Bethlehem, was buried in the neighbourhood, and Jacob placed a pillar over her grave. The bones of Joseph were brought into the land of Canaan by the Israelites under Joshua, and were buried at Shechem.

**3. The Marriage of Isaac.**—Now that Isaac had reached the age of manhood, Abraham was anxious that he should avoid making an alliance with the Canaanites around them. He therefore sent the oldest servant of his house to Haran in Mesopotamia, where his brother Nahor lived, with instructions to bring from thence a wife for his son. At a well outside the city the servant met Rebekah, and, as he had prayed God that he might meet there the future wife of Isaac, he took the appearance of Rebekah at that moment as an answer to his prayer.

The brother of the maiden, who was named Laban, came to the well to meet the stranger, and invited him to Nahor's house. Bethuel (son of Nahor), the father of the maiden, and Laban her brother agreed to let her go with the servant, as it was evident the thing proceeded from God. Isaac, who had gone into the fields to meditate in the evening, met the company returning, and accompanied them to the tents. After his marriage with Rebekah, he was comforted for his mother's death.



RACHEL'S TOMB.

**4. Abraham's Marriage with Keturah, and Death.**—After Isaac's marriage, Abraham took a second wife, whose name was Keturah. He had six children by her, who became the ancestors of Arabian tribes. One of them was Midian, who was the father of the Midianites, a tribe frequently mentioned in the succeeding history. He sent all these sons away with presents before his death, so that they might not dispute the inheritance

with Isaac. Abraham died at the age of 175 years, and was buried by Isaac and Ishmael, his sons in the Cave of Machpelah.

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#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

1. What is the meaning Jehovah-jireh? Why was it so called?
2. Name the persons connected with patriarchal history who were buried in the Cave of Machpelah.
3. Name one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah who was the ancestor of a tribe frequently mentioned in Old Testament history.

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### CHAPTER VII.

#### THE LIFE OF ISAAC.

**1. Esau and Jacob born : Esau sells his birthright.**—For twenty years after their marriage, Isaac and Rebekah had no children, but then, in answer to Isaac's prayers, twins were born to them, who were named Esau and Jacob. As the boys grew up, Esau, who was the elder, became a skilful hunter, and was preferred by his father; Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents, and was the favourite of his mother. One day, Esau returned from the chase exceedingly hungry, and seeing Jacob eating a mess of pottage, entreated that he might share his meal. Jacob refused, except he would agree to give him his birthright in exchange. Esau carelessly consented, and is thus termed in the New Testament, "a profane person, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (Heb. xii. 16).

**2. Isaac with Abimelech.**—A famine having arisen in the land, Isaac went to Gerar, a district of which Abimelech was king. Here, like his father Abraham on a similar occasion, he persuaded his wife Rebekah to say she was his sister; but Abimelech accidently finding out the truth, reproved him for his deceit, at the same

time charging the people not to molest either of them. While at Gerar, which was a Philistine kingdom, Isaac's wealth increased enormously, so that the Philistines, envying his prosperity, stopped up the wells that were dug in the time of his father. The patience of his character is shown in that he continued to surrender his wells (a kind of property very valuable in that country) to his quarrelsome neighbours, until at last he discovered one that they allowed him to possess in peace. On his return to Beersheba, God renewed to him the promises which He had formerly made to Abraham. Abimelech, finding his alliance a desirable thing, came to him at Beersheba from Gerar, and they made there a covenant of mutual friendship and peace. About this time Esau, having attained the age of forty years, took for his wives two women of the tribe of the Hittites, which was a sore grief to the minds of his parents, Isaac and Rebekah.

**3. Jacob obtains the Blessing.**—When Isaac was old, and it seemed as though his end were near, he resolved to bestow his solemn blessing upon his elder and favourite son. He therefore bade him take his weapons, and find him some venison, that his soul, refreshed and strengthened by a dish of the food he loved, might be able to bless him. Rebekah heard the message that Isaac gave to Esau, and quickly formed a plan by which this solemn investiture of spiritual privileges might be secured for Jacob. It was an easy matter to deceive the taste of so old a man as Isaac, so, sending for two kids of the goats, she made savoury meat for Isaac in the way she knew he liked best, while Esau was far away, occupied in the excitement of the chase. But Jacob's skin was smooth and sleek, while the skin of Esau was rough and hairy; so to complete the deception, she placed the skins of the kids on Jacob's hands, and on the smooth of his neck. Thus disguised, he came into his father's presence, not without a keen sense of the danger he was incurring if he should be detected, but his objections were silenced by Rebekah, who consented to bear the blame of the transaction. The old man expressed his surprise that

the venison had been found so quickly, but Jacob satisfied him with the ready answer, "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me." The handing down of the blessing of Abraham to the third generation was a solemn event, and Isaac's suspicions were aroused by the voice of the speaker, which he recognised as having a strong likeness to that of Jacob, but he discerned him not because his hands were hairy, and he pronounced upon him the covenant blessing. Soon after, Esau came in from his hunting, and brought his savoury meat to his father; but the old man wildly asked who it was that had been before with venison, and had obtained his blessing, adding, "yea, and he shall be blessed." The anguish of Esau at being thus deprived of his father's blessing was sharp and bitter. He saw at once that it was Jacob, the Supplanter, who had the second time contrived to thrust him aside, and occupy his place. "Is he not rightly named Jacob?" he said; "for he hath supplanted me these two times, he took away my birthright, and, behold, he hath taken away my blessing." In answer to his pitiful entreaties, Isaac bestowed on him a modified blessing, but it contained such unwelcome conditions that he should live by his sword, and should serve his brother till the time came that he should have dominion, when he should break his yoke from off his neck. Esau hated Jacob for having thus deprived him of his blessing, and openly avowed his intention of killing him, after his father was dead. Alarmed for the safety of her favourite son, Rebekah instructed Jacob to flee to his uncle Laban at Haran, stating to Isaac as an excuse for his departure, that she was afraid he would take a wife from among the daughters of the Canaanite tribe among whom they dwelt.

**4. Isaac's Death.**—The death of Isaac occurred many years later, after Jacob's return to Canaan, but nothing further is recorded of his life. He attained a greater age than any other of the patriarchs, having completed his 180th year at the time of his death. He died at Hebron, and his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him in the cave of Machpelah.

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

1. Give the character of Esau as described in the New Testament.
2. How was the patience of Isaac's character shown?
3. What does the word "Jacob" mean? Show that it was a true description of his character.



HEBRON.

## CHAPTER VIII.

JACOB'S JOURNEY TO HARAN: HIS SOJOURN THERE:  
AND HIS RETURN.

1. **The Vision of the Ladder.**—Jacob left Beersheba lone and friendless on his long journey to Haran, where his uncle Laban lived. Before he departed, Isaac invoked



upon him the blessing of Abraham, and solemnly charged him not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. God's chosen race must be kept distinct from a people who were constantly increasing in wickedness, and whose lives were corrupted by the foulest idolatries. At sunset, after his first day's journey, the weary traveller laid him down on the ground to sleep, making a pillow of the rude stones that lay scattered around. In his sleep, he dreamed that a ladder was set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. At the head of the ladder was God Himself, who renewed to Jacob the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, and thus recognised him as the true heir of Isaac. On awaking from his sleep, Jacob exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven." From henceforth, the scene of this memorable vision was called Bethel, a word which means the *House of God*. Taking the stone which had been his pillow, Jacob set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. He made a solemn vow to God, that if He would protect him, and keep him from want, so that he might return to his father's home in peace, then (1) Jehovah should be his God; (2) that stone which he had set up for a pillar should be God's House; and (3), he would give to God a tenth of all he might acquire.

**2. Jacob with Laban in Haran.**—On arriving at Haran, Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, bringing her sheep to the well to give them water. Their meeting, when they had become known to each other, was glad and joyful; and when Laban heard the news of his arrival, he warmly embraced him, and brought him to his house. When he had been a month with them, Laban proposed that he should receive wages for his services, on which Jacob offered to serve him seven years for his daughter Rachel. The seven years seemed to be but a few days for the love he bore her; but at the end of that time he who had deceived his father was deceived himself, and Laban gave him Leah, her elder

sister, instead. His excuse was that it was contrary to custom in that country to give the younger sister in marriage before the elder. He, however, agreed to give him Rachel also for his wife, on condition that he served him another seven years. Jacob loved Rachel, but regarded Leah with aversion. During the period of his stay with Laban, he had eleven sons and one daughter. The following is a table of Jacob's children, which includes one (Benjamin) born afterwards in the land of Canaan:—

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Reuben, Simeon,<br>Levi, Judah,<br>Issachar, Zebulon,<br>and Dinah (daughter). | } | Children of Leah.  |
| Joseph and Benjamin.   |   |  |
| Dan and Naphtali.  |   | Children of Rachel.  |
| Gad and Asher.   |   | Children of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid.<br>Children of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid. |

At the end of the fourteen years, Jacob proposed to Laban that he should depart, in order to make provision for his household; but Laban's wealth had increased so considerably under Jacob's care, that he begged him to remain, and agreed to pay him wages in cattle. By Jacob's craft, the bargain turned out very much in his own favour, so that in six years, the sons of Laban saw with anger and jealousy, the greater part of their father's flocks transferred to his son-in-law. Laban had ten times changed his wages, but every plan seemed to work for his advantage; so that finding Laban's friendship had changed into aversion, Jacob proposed to his wives that they should depart into the land of Canaan.

**3. Jacob's Return to Canaan.**—His own resolution to return being confirmed by a Divine command, Jacob set his wives and sons on camels, and seized the occasion of Laban's absence at a sheep-shearing, to steal away unobserved. He had been gone three days before his flight was made known to Laban, who pursued after him hotly, his anger being increased by the theft of his household gods, which he imputed to Jacob. After a chase of seven days, Laban overtook him in Mount Gilead, but God had before enjoined him to do Jacob no harm. Ho

searched Jacob's tents for his gods, but was unable to find them, Rachel having craftily concealed them. Having passed some time in giving vent to mutual reproaches, Jacob and Laban made a covenant on the spot where they stood, where they erected a heap of stones, which was henceforth called *Galeed*, or the heap of witness. Neither of them was to pass over this boundary to do the other harm.

**4. Jacob's Meeting with Esau.**—Laban, having taken his departure, Jacob went on his way, and was comforted by a vision of angels, which assured him of the Divine protection. He called the scene of the vision Mahanaim, a word meaning, "the two hosts or armies." He was now approaching the territory of his brother Esau, who dwelt in Mount Seir, and he had reason to fear that he would now take vengeance on him for the double upplanting of earlier years. He sent messengers to inform his brother of his return to Canaan, and of the wealth he had acquired in Haran; and they brought back the alarming tidings, that Esau was coming to meet him at the head of four hundred men. In great anxiety and distress, he divided his company into two bands, so that if Esau smote the one, the other could escape. He then poured forth his soul in prayer to God, "Deliver me I pray Thee from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he come to smite me, and the mother with the children." But he did not neglect prudent means of appeasing his brother's anger, for he sent him several large droves of cattle, so that if his object were plunder, he might be satisfied without resorting to robbery and murder. Then sending his two wives and eleven sons across the brook Jabbok, he himself remained alone on the other side, and "there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This mysterious stranger, who was none other than the Lord Jehovah, allowed Jacob to prevail in the wrestling, but in the course of it He touched the hollow of his thigh so as to put it out of joint. The day breaking, He said He must now depart, but Jacob replied, "I will not let

Thou go except Thou bless me." God then changed his name, as He had done on a similar occasion in the life of Abraham, so that he should be no longer called Jacob, *the supplanter*, but rise to the higher dignity of Israel, *a prince of God*, for "as a prince hast thou power with God and men and hast prevailed." Jacob therefore called the name of the place Peniel, which means, "the face of God." Shortly afterwards, he met his brother Esau, and bowed himself seven times to the ground, as he approached him. Esau received him tenderly and joyously, and the brothers parted in a peaceful and affectionate manner, Esau returning to the rugged mountains of Seir, called after him the land of Edom, and Jacob proceeding on his way to Canaan.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

1. Give the meanings of Bethel, Gilead, Mahanaim, Peniel, and Israel.
2. State the particulars of Jacob's vow at Bethel.
3. How long did Jacob remain with Laban at Haran?
4. What covenant did Jacob and Laban make together at Gilead?
5. Why was the new name of Israel given to Jacob?

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### CHAPTER IX.

#### THE LIFE OF JACOB IN CANAAN.

**1. Events at Shechem.**—Having now crossed the Jordan, Jacob abode for a short time at Shechem, where he bought a field of the sons of Hamor, a Hivite chieftain. This spot was afterwards chosen as the place where Joseph's bones should be buried (Joshua xxiv. 32), and the well which was in it was known for centuries afterwards as "Jacob's well." (John iv. 5). At Shechem also

Jacob built an altar, as Abraham had done many years before; he called it El-elohe-Israel, *i.e.*, "God the God of Israel." Later on, an unfortunate occurrence happened here, which threatened to embroil Jacob with the people of the land. Dinah, his only daughter, going out to some festive meeting, was carried away by Shechem, the son of Hamor, upon which Simeon and Levi, to revenge the wrong done to their sister, put all the inhabitants to death. Jacob sternly rebuked his sons for this violent and cruel proceeding, and on his deathbed denounced it in these severe terms, "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath for it was cruel."

**2. Jacob's Journey to the South of Canaan.**—Acting under the Divine guidance, Jacob now left Shechem, and proceeded to Bethel, where he saw the vision of the ladder, and made his vow to God. Here he raised an altar to God, and purified his household from the strange gods his wives had brought from Haran. At Bethel, Deborah, the nurse of his mother, Rebekah, died, and was buried under Allon-bachuth, "the oak of weeping." Here God again renewed to him the promises formerly made to Abraham and Isaac. Proceeding on his southward journey, Jacob approached Ephrath, the ancient Bethlehem, and here Rachel died in giving birth to her younger son Benjamin. Having buried his favourite wife, Jacob resumed his journey, and joined his father, Isaac, at Hebron. Soon afterwards, Isaac died, and was buried by his sons, Esau and Jacob, in the cave of Machpelah.

**3. Joseph Sold by his Brethren.**—Joseph was his father's favourite son, and to show his fondness for him he had given him a coat of many colours. This partiality of his father excited the envy of his brothers, who hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. Two dreams, which he had described to them, still further called forth their bitter feelings. In the first dream, the sheaves of corn that they were binding made obeisance to his sheaf, which remained upright; in the second dream, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars, made obeisance

to him. Soon afterwards, Joseph was sent by his father to Shechem, where his brothers were minding the sheep, to report concerning their welfare. As soon as they saw him they began to plot his destruction, but the milder counsels of Reuben prevailed, and they decided to cast him into a deep pit, so as to avoid any actual shedding of blood. They had already stripped him of his coat of many colours, and cast him into the pit, when a company of Ishmaelite merchants passing by, on their way to Egypt, made them alter their intention. They decided to sell him to these travelling merchants, and twenty pieces of silver was the price agreed upon. Dipping the coat of many colours into the blood of a kid, they brought it to their father, declaring that they had found it in that state in a field. Jacob thereupon felt sure that some wild beast had devoured his favourite son, and he mourned for him many days. Thus he who had once deceived his father, was himself deceived by his sons.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX.

1. What references are there to Jacob's field at Shechem in the Book of Joshua and St. John's gospel?
2. Show that Jacob followed the example of Abraham in building altars as he passed through the land.
3. Near what place did the death of Rachel occur?

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### CHAPTER X.

#### JOSEPH IN THE LAND OF EGYPT.

1. **Joseph in Potiphar's House, and in Prison.**—The Ishmaelite, or (as they are sometimes called) Midianite merchants, when they had arrived in Egypt, sold Joseph to Potiphar, who was captain of the executioners to King Pharaoh. Here he gained to such an extent the con-

fidence of his master, that he entrusted all his business to his care, and made him overseer of all his house. But when Potiphar's wife tempted him to commit a great sin, and Joseph replied that he could not do such great wickedness and sin against God, this wicked woman was so angry with him that she accused him of an attempt to commit the very crime he had so firmly resisted. Potiphar, believing her report, cast Joseph into prison, where at first he was treated with great harshness, for it is said of him in the 105th Psalm, "Whose feet they hurt with fetters, he was laid in iron." But he soon obtained favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison, who committed all the other prisoners to his care. Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker being cast into prison, and placed under Joseph's supervision, he noticed one morning that they both looked unusually sad. In answer to his inquiries, they replied that they had each had a dream, which they were unable to interpret. Joseph thereupon having heard the dreams, declared the interpretations. The chief butler was in three days to be restored to his office; the chief baker was, within the same period, to be hanged on a tree. Joseph then appealed to the former to remember him, when he had regained his position, and make mention of him unto Pharaoh. The result of this entreaty is given in the simple language of Scripture—"Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."

**2. Joseph Exalted to be Governor of Egypt.**—Two years now passed away, and Joseph still remained in the prison. At this period, King Pharaoh had two remarkable dreams, which none of the Egyptian wise men could interpret. In the first dream, he saw seven fat and beautiful cows come up out of the river Nile, and begin eating the grass on its banks; then followed seven lean and ill-favoured cows, such as he had never seen in all the land of Egypt for badness, and devoured the others. In his second dream, he saw seven ears of corn come up upon one stalk, fat and good; then after them sprung up seven thin ears, blasted with the east wind, and devoured

the full ears. The king being in such distress at finding no one able to interpret these dreams, the chief butler thought of Joseph in the prison, and told Pharaoh how the Hebrew captive had truly declared, two years ago, the meaning of his own dream. On hearing this incident, Pharaoh hastily sent for Joseph, and told him his two dreams. Joseph replied that though there were two dreams, the meaning was one and the same. The seven fat cows and the seven full ears were seven years of plenty which were about to come; the seven lean cows and the seven thin ears were seven years of famine that would follow after them. Joseph therefore advised the king to look out for some capable man to set over his affairs, so that enough might be saved out of the years of plenty to provide for the years of famine. As it was evident the spirit of God was with Joseph, Pharaoh and his councillors agreed that he was the man most fitted for the post; and thus at the age of thirty years, he was appointed governor over the land of Egypt, second only in dignity and authority to the king. To make him a naturalised Egyptian, Pharaoh gave him an Egyptian name, Zaphnath-paaneah (revealer of secrets); and he married Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest or prince of On, by whom he had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. In the seven years of plenty, "the earth brought forth by handfuls," and Joseph gathered together vast quantities of corn which he placed in storehouses. When the time of famine came, the surrounding nations looked to Egypt, as usual, to supply their wants, "and all nations came unto Egypt, to Joseph, to buy corn, because the famine was so sore in all lands."

### 3. Joseph's Brethren come to Egypt to buy Corn.—

Among the companies that came to Egypt in the early years of the famine to buy corn, were the ten sons of Jacob. Benjamin was not with them, for having lost one of the sons of his beloved Rachel, Jacob was afraid to risk the safety of the other. Being brought to the presence of the governor, Joseph's ten brothers bowed themselves down to the earth before him, thus fulfilling



his early dream. He at once recognised them, but they failed to see in the great Egyptian lord, before whom they bowed, any likeness to the lad of seventeen years whom they had sold to the travelling Ishmaelites. Joseph, in answer to their application, spoke roughly to them, and pretended to take them for spies, arousing their fears by shutting them up in confinement three days. At the end of that time, he announced to them that he would test the truth of their statement by their bringing to him their youngest brother, who, they said, was with their father; and that one of them (Simeon) must remain as an hostage for their reappearance. The other nine were permitted to take corn for the supply of their households and depart. In their deep affliction, the remembrance of their sin in selling their brother arose vividly before their minds; and, as they earnestly debated this matter among themselves, they little thought that the governor who had before addressed them through an interpreter, understood every word that they said. On their journey home, a fresh cause of trouble was discovered; for each man found the money he had taken for his corn in the top of his sack. When Jacob had heard their adventures, he declared that Benjamin should not go down, for his brother was dead, and if mischief befel him, it would bring down his father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER X.

1. What particulars concerning Joseph's treatment in prison are given in the Book of Psalms?
2. How old was Joseph when he was sold into Egypt? What was his age when he was made governor of the land?
3. What was Joseph's Egyptian name? What was its meaning? State the name of his wife, and the names of his two sons.

## CHAPTER XI.

JOSEPH IN THE LAND OF EGYPT (*Continued*).

1. **The Second Journey of Joseph's Brethren to Egypt.**—The first supply of corn being exhausted, and the famine still prevailing, Jacob directed his sons to go again to Egypt to buy food. Judah, as the spokesman of his brothers, told him that they dare not appear before the governor without Benjamin, so Jacob, with great reluctance, consented for him to go. Taking a present therefore for the governor, and a double supply of money, they appeared before Joseph, who treated them with more kindness than at first, released Simeon unto them, and made them dine at his house. At the first sight of his brother Benjamin, Joseph was unable to restrain his emotion, so rushing into an inner chamber he there gave vent to his feelings. As they were seated for dinner, they marvelled to see that each one was placed according to his age. Joseph sent them messes from his own table, but Benjamin's mess was five times as much as any of the others.

2. **Joseph makes himself known to his Brethren.**—Joseph made one further trial of his brothers to see if they were willing to leave Benjamin a slave in Egypt as they had previously left him. He instructed his steward to put his silver cup into Benjamin's sack, and when they were advanced some distance on their homeward journey, posted a messenger after them charging them with robbery. Conscious of their innocence, they readily agreed that he in whose sack the cup should be found should become a slave; what then was their consternation when it was found in Benjamin's sack? To Joseph's proposition that Benjamin should remain as his slave, leaving the others free to depart, Judah passionately protested that it would cause the death of the old man, their father, and that he would stay and suffer instead. Unable any longer to restrain his feelings, Joseph caused

the room to be cleared of attendants and exclaimed: "I am Joseph, doth my father yet live?" His brethren were so stupefied with terror and astonishment, that they were unable to answer; but he quickly assured them that he had forgiven the past, and attributed his presence in Egypt to the over-ruling providence of God. As there were yet five years of famine to come, he bade them go and tell his father the joyful tidings that his son was found, and bring him and all his household down into Egypt, a command to which Pharaoh, when he heard of the matter, added the force of his authority, Jacob did not at first believe that such good news could be true; but when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent, his spirit revived, and he said: "Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

**3. Jacob in Egypt: His Death and Burial.**—Jacob, on his way to Egypt, resting for the night at Beersheba, saw a vision from God, promising that while in Egypt his children should be formed into a great nation, and that they should surely come out of it again. Joseph met his father in the land of Goshen, and the meeting between father and son, so long separated, was very affecting. By the command of Pharaoh, Jacob and his family were placed in the land of Goshen, and the royal herds were intrusted to their keeping. On seeing Jacob, Pharaoh inquired his age, upon which he replied that he was a hundred and thirty years old. A few years later, Jacob's life drawing to a close, he made Joseph solemnly promise not to bury him in the land of Egypt, but to lay him by the side of his fathers in the cave of Machpelah. Before he died, he showed especial favour to Joseph by allowing his two sons to be of equal rank with his own, each of them the head of a distinct tribe. When Joseph brought them to receive their grandfather's blessing, the blind old man would not bless them in the order as they were placed before him, but crossed his hands, placing his right hand on the head of the younger Ephraim, and his left hand on the head of the elder, Manasseh. Joseph, vexed at the apparent mistake, would have guided his

hands in a different manner, but Jacob replied, "I know it, my son, but his younger brother shall be greater than he," and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. He then called his twelve sons to his bedside, and proceeded to bestow on them his last blessing, prophetic of the future destiny of the tribes of which they were heads. The birthright which Reuben had forfeited for lewdness and irreverence, could not be bestowed on Simeon and Levi because of their great cruelty to the Shechemites, Judah was therefore declared to be he to whom his father's children should bow down, and with whom the sceptre should rest till the coming of Shiloh. Again giving them a solemn charge to bury him with his fathers, "he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered to his people." Joseph ordered the physicians of the court to embalm his body, and then requested permission of Pharaoh to carry out his dying request. On arriving at the land of Canaan, there was such a deep mourning at the funeral, that the Canaanites called the name of the place where the Egyptians halted Abel-Mizraim, *i.e.*, "the mourning of the Egyptians."

4. **Joseph's Death.**—On their return from Jacob's funeral, Joseph's brethren were afraid that he would now take vengeance on them for the great wrong they had formerly done him; but he comforted them, and assured them of his protection. He lived to see his descendants unto the fourth generation. When his end drew near, he told his brethren that God would not suffer them to become merged with the Egyptians, but would certainly bring them up out of Egypt again. He therefore exacted from them a solemn oath, that when they left Egypt, they should carry his bones with them. Joseph then died at the age of 110 years, and he was embalmed, and put into a coffin in Egypt. When, two hundred years later, Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, we are told that he took the bones of Joseph with him (Exodus xiii. 19).

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI.

1. How does the good conduct of Judah appear in the proceedings of the sons of Jacob in Egypt?
2. What especial favour did Jacob show to the house of Joseph? What remarkable incident happened in the blessing of Joseph's sons?
3. Where was Jacob buried? What persons, among his ancestors, had been previously buried in the same place?
4. What promise did Joseph exact of the Israelites concerning his remains? How was this promise kept?

## PART II.

From the death of Joseph to the death of Moses, B.C.  
1635-1452—A Period of 183 years.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE EARLY LIFE OF MOSES.

1. **The Egyptian Bondage.**—When that generation had passed away with whom Joseph lived, and a new king had arisen who was heedless of the services he had rendered, the prophecy of Abraham's vision was fulfilled, "thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall serve them." The new king saw a strange people dwelling in his land, with manners, customs, and religion different to the great mass of his subjects, increasing in such an extraordinary manner, that they threatened in the course of time to become sufficiently powerful to wrest the sovereign authority from its present possessors, and give law to the whole land of Egypt. He first tried harsh measures of repression, to deaden all their nobler instincts with excessive and brutalizing toil, in building him treasure cities; but this policy failed to lessen their numbers, or subdue their spirit. Then he commanded the midwives to throw all the male children into the river Nile, but this they, from the fear of God, refused to do. Lastly, he made a law running to this effect, "every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

2. **Birth of Moses: His life at Pharaoh's Court.**—While things were in this state, a son was born to

Amram and Jochebed of the tribe of Levi, who, being a goodly child, was hidden by his mother three months, in disregard of the law. Not being able to conceal him any longer, she made with some bulrushes a little boat, daubing it with slime and pitch to keep out the water, and having laid him in it, placed it among the flags on the brink of the river. She then left Miriam her daughter some little distance off, to see what would become of the babe. Soon after, Pharaoh's daughter coming down to bathe, saw the boat in the flags, and was greatly surprised to find that it contained one of the condemned Hebrew children. Struck with compassion for the child, she resolved to adopt it, and named it Moses (drawn out), because she drew him out of the water. Miriam having suggested to her that it would be better for a Hebrew woman to be the child's nurse, brought Jochebed its own mother, who nursed it at her home, and was paid for her labour. We learn from the speech of St. Stephen in the *Acts of the Apostles* (chapter vii. verse 22), that Moses, as he grew up, "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." When he was forty years old, he was called upon to decide whether he would continue the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, or cast in his lot with the despised people of God; and he chose the latter course, though it was full of difficulty and trouble. One day, as he was walking abroad, he saw an Egyptian striking an Israelite, and seeing no person near, he took the part of his own countryman, and slew the Egyptian. The next day two Israelites were striving together, and, in answer to his friendly remonstrance, one of them demanded whether he was about to kill him as he had killed the Egyptian the day before. Terrified at the thought of his deed being known, he fled to the land of Midian in the Arabian wilderness, which was inhabited by a race of people descended from Abraham by his wife Keturah.

**3. Moses in Midian.**—Having arrived at Midian, Moses sat down by a well, and the daughters of Jethro, the priest or prince of Midian coming at that time to

water their flock, he protected them from the rudeness of some shepherds who tried to drive their sheep away, so that their own might be supplied first. Jethro, hearing from his daughters of the stranger's kindness, invited him to his house, and shortly afterwards gave him Zipporah his daughter to be his wife. Moses remained in Midian with Jethro forty years, God in the meanwhile preparing him for the great work of delivering His people. There, in the calm solitude of a shepherd's life, he learned the great lessons of patience and meekness, which shone conspicuously in his after history. At the end of the forty years, as he was feeding his flock on Mount Horeb, he saw a bush on fire, which, to his great surprise, though it continued burning, did not consume away. Approaching the spot with feelings of curiosity, he was startled by a voice out of the midst of the bush commanding him to take his shoes off his feet, for the place on which he was standing was holy ground. God then revealed to him that the time was now come when the Israelites were to be delivered from the Egyptian bondage, and that he was to be their leader. Moses, with that meekness which was so prominent a feature in his character, prayed to be excused from this service; but his objections were overruled, and he was assured of the presence and help of God. If his commission to act on their behalf was called in question by his brethren, he was to declare that I AM had sent him unto them. If they demanded signs, he was (1) to cast his rod on the ground, when it would become a serpent; (2) to put his hand in his bosom when it would become leprous; (3) to pour water from the river on the dry land, when it would be turned into blood. As he had not a ready flow of language, and was defective as a speaker, Aaron, his brother, was appointed to speak for him. Having taken leave of Jethro, he returned to Egypt, and showed himself to his brethren, who were groaning under hard bondage. When they saw the signs he showed them, they believed in his Divine mission, and bowed their heads and worshipped.



## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

1. How long was Moses a resident at Pharaoh's Court? How long was he at Midian?
2. What do we learn from the *Acts of the Apostles* of the education of Moses?
3. What signs was Moses instructed to show his brethren to convince them that God had sent him?

## CHAPTER II.

## THE TEN PLAGUES.

**1. First Plague: Turning the Water into Blood.**— Having been admitted into Pharaoh's presence, Moses demanded permission for the Israelites to go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice unto the Lord their God. Pharaoh curtly answered that he knew not the Lord, neither would he let Israel go. To a further remonstrance from Moses and Aaron, the king replied that they hindered the people from their burdens, and that their having time to debate such matters was a proof that sufficient work was not given them to do. He therefore determined that in their work of brick-making, no straw should be henceforth supplied to them, but that they were to make the same number of bricks daily as before. The Israelites sent up a remonstrance to Pharaoh against this fresh burden, but no remedy was granted them, and they complained bitterly to Moses of the failure of his enterprise, who, in his turn, complained to God. On their second application to Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron were instructed to throw down a rod before him, and it would be turned into a serpent. The magicians of Egypt having imitated this miracle, Pharaoh was not convinced, so by God's direction the water of the river Nile was turned into blood. The effect of this

plague was that the fish died, and the people had to dig round about the river for water to drink. The magicians of Egypt did this also by their enchantments, so Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he refused to let the people go.

**2. Second Plague—The Plague of Frogs.**—The second plague that God sent on the Egyptians was the plague of frogs. The frogs came up out of the river Nile, invading the houses, entering even the ovens, and finding their way into the kneading-troughs. Though the magicians of Egypt brought up frogs by their enchantments, Pharaoh was so far impressed by this miracle, that he requested Moses and Aaron to intercede with God that this plague might be taken away. The dead frogs were gathered together in large heaps, and the land stank with the loathsome effluvia they emitted. Pharaoh, when he saw that the judgment was removed, hardened his heart, and would not listen to the demands of Moses.

**3. Third Plague: The Plague of Lice.**—Aaron was next directed to stretch forth his rod, and smite the dust of the land, so that it should become lice on man and beast. The magicians failed to imitate this miracle, confessing that the hand of God was displayed in it, but Pharaoh hardened his heart, and would not let the people go.

**4. Fourth Plague: The Plague of Flies.**—Moses was next directed to threaten Pharaoh with swarms of flies if he persisted in detaining the people. Accordingly, the houses of the Egyptians were filled with flies, and the land was corrupted with the swarms of these insects which infested it. The miraculous nature of this visitation was further shown by the fact that it was not felt in Goshen, where the Israelites resided. Pharaoh was so far impressed by it that he offered to allow the Israelites to sacrifice to their God in Egypt; but Moses explained that this was impossible, since the animals to be offered were regarded as gods by the Egyptians. Pharaoh therefore agreed that they should depart, on the condition that they should not go far away. But when, at the prayer

of Moses, the swarms of flies were removed, he repented of his concession, and refused to let the people go.

**5. Fifth Plague: The Murrain of Beasts.**—The next plague was of a still heavier nature. A dreadful disease broke out upon the oxen, horses, asses, camels, and sheep, destroying them in vast quantities; but those belonging to the Israelites were untouched by the plague. Still the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he persisted in detaining the people.

**6. Sixth Plague: The Plague of Boils and Blains.**—Moses was next directed to sprinkle ashes before heaven in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, which should become a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and beast. The magicians themselves were so afflicted with the boils, that they were unable to appear before Moses. But this plague failed to soften the hard heart of Pharaoh.

**7. Seventh Plague: The Plague of Hail.**—Moses was next directed to threaten Pharaoh with a terrible hail-storm, giving the Egyptians the opportunity, of which some of them availed themselves, of housing their cattle so as to avoid its fury. Then followed a dreadful thunderstorm and hailstorm, the fire from the lightning running along the ground, and, together with the hail, destroying every man and beast that was left to face its terrible force, blasting every herb, and breaking every tree. In great fright, Pharaoh sent for Moses, entreating him to intercede with his God, not to send any more mighty thunderings and hail, and he would certainly let the people go. When the judgment was over, however, he again hardened his heart, and refused to perform his promise.

**8. Eighth Plague: The Plague of Locusts.**—At the bare mention of the appearance of these terrible insects, Pharaoh's counsellors urged him to comply with the demands of Moses, and he so far consented as to allow the men to go, on condition that their families and their cattle remained behind. As Moses could not agree to these terms, the visitation of locusts appeared, very grievous, darkening the whole land by their numbers, and eating up all the green herbs that the hail had left.

While the locusts were ravaging the land, Pharaoh was very penitent; but when, at the intercession of Moses, they were removed, he again hardened his heart, and refused the people permission to depart.

**9. Ninth Plague: The Plague of Darkness.**—The next plague was a three days' darkness, described as "darkness that may be felt." Men could not see one another as they walked about, and business was suspended; but the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. This plague so terrified Pharaoh that it wrung from him a further concession that the men might take their families with them, only they must leave their cattle behind. To this, however, Moses could not consent. "Not a hoof," he said, "must remain behind." With a stern command never more to trouble him with their presence, and a threat of instant death in case of disobedience, the angry monarch ended the interview; Moses, in words of prophetic import, declaring, "Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more."

**10. The Institution of the Passover.**—Before the last and greatest plague was sent on the Egyptians, a ceremony was ordained, that should keep in their memory for thousands of years the great salvation which was being wrought for them. The month Nisan (March to April), in which they were now living, was henceforth to be accounted the first month of the year. On the tenth day of this month, each household was to select a lamb, and keep it in their houses till the fourteenth. On the evening of the fourteenth day, the lamb was to be slain, and its blood smeared on the two side-posts, and the upper door-post of the houses. It was to be roasted whole, eaten during the night with bitter herbs, and all that remained of it in the morning burnt with fire. They were not to eat it in the usual manner, reclining before a table, but standing up, prepared for a long journey, with their loins girt, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands; it was also to be eaten in haste.

**11. The Tenth Plague: The Death of the First-born.**—At midnight, while the Israelites were eating the

Paschal meal, the Destroying Angel was sent forth on his dreadful errand to slay the first-born in each Egyptian family. Seeing the blood on the door-posts of the Israelite houses, he *passed over* them, and so the feast instituted on this memorable night, was called the *Feast of the Passover*. That night, in Egypt, there was a great cry, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. Pharaoh rose up in haste, and sent to Moses and Aaron, giving them permission to depart, the terror-stricken Egyptians urging them to go quickly, because they said they were all dead men.

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

1. What was the immediate result of the mission of Moses to King Pharaoh?
2. How was the miraculous nature of many of the plagues clearly shown?
3. What reason did Moses give why the people could not sacrifice to God in Egypt?
4. Why was the feast, instituted at this time, called the Feast of the Passover?
5. How did the Destroying Angel distinguish the house of an Israelite from the house of an Egyptian?

## CHAPTER III.

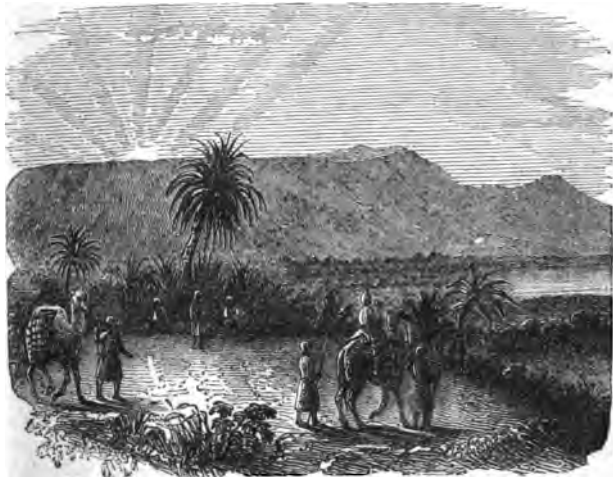
## THE DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT, AND THE JOURNEY TO MOUNT SINAI.

1. **The Passage of the Red Sea.**—In their eagerness to rid themselves of the cause of such terrible punishment, the Egyptians pressed upon the Israelites silver, gold, apparel, and everything they needed. Thus God's promise was fulfilled, that when they went out, they should not go empty. God did not suffer them to go the shortest way to the land of Canaan, for an unarmed

multitude, such as they were, would have been afraid to face the warlike Philistines who dwelt in southern Palestine. They were therefore led by the way of the Red Sea. Moses was careful, in going out, to take the bones of Joseph with him. As they proceeded, God went before them, by day in a pillar of cloud, by night in a pillar of fire. But when the first sensations of terror had passed away, and news came to King Pharaoh that the Israelites were leaving the country, he repented that he had given them permission to depart, and resolved to bring them back by force. With 600 chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, he marched after them, and overtook them as they were encamped by the Red Sea. The unhappy Israelites could see no escape from destruction before or behind; but Moses, by command of God, stretched his rod over the sea, causing it to go back by a strong east wind, so as to leave a passage for men and cattle to pass over. The pillar of cloud also now went behind the Israelites to be a barrier between them and their foes. Closely pursued by the Egyptians, the Israelites now advanced through the Red Sea. The horrors of that dreadful night are described in the 77th Psalm; "The clouds poured out water; the voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook." When the Israelites had safely crossed, Moses was directed to stretch his hand again over the sea, and the waters returned to their place, causing the destruction of Pharaoh and all his host. The next day, the liberated Israelites saw their enemies dead on the sea-shore. To celebrate this great deliverance, Moses composed a triumphal ode, and Miriam, his sister, went out at the head of a procession of women with timbrels and dances.

2. **The Journey to Rephidim.**—After a journey of three days, the Israelites came to Marah, where the waters being bitter, Moses cast a tree into them, and made them fit to drink. Their next halting-place was Elim, where there were twelve wells, and seventy palm trees. From Elim, they passed to the wilderness of Sin,

where they murmured for want of food. They felt keenly the hardships of their new state, while the burdens under which they formerly groaned troubled them no longer. To satisfy their hunger, quails were sent them, and to furnish them with a constant supply of food, a substance was supplied to them, described as "a small round thing as small as the hoar-frost on the ground." The people, on seeing it, exclaimed *Man-hu* (what is it?), whence it was called manna. Manna was sent them twice every day except on the Sabbath, till they entered the Promised Land. On Friday, they gathered a double supply which lasted during the Sabbath on Saturday. It was useless to hoard up this substance, for it only remained sweet during the day that it was gathered. "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack."



WELLS OF MOSES.

Thus God taught the Israelites the lesson contained in the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Passing on from the wilderness of Sin, they came to Rephidim, where the people were so angry with Moses because they

could not get water, that they were almost ready to stone him. He was directed to strike the rock of Horeb, and water should proceed from it. The name of the place where this incident occurred was called Massah (temptation), and Meribah (strife). It is referred to in the 95th Psalm, in a passage which may be rendered thus, "To-day, hear ye His voice, 'harden not your hearts as at Meribah, and as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works.'"

**3. The Battle with the Amalekites.**—At Rephidim, the onward course of the people was stayed by the opposition of a fierce tribe called the Amalekites. Joshua was appointed by Moses to lead the people to battle, while he, on a neighbouring hill, watched the fight. In this first battle with their foes, God taught the people not to rely on their own strength, but on His powerful aid. For when Moses held up his hands in prayer, Israel prevailed; when, through weariness, he was obliged to drop them, the advantage rested with the Amalekites. Therefore Aaron on one side, and Hur on the other, held up his hands for him, and the Israelites gained a complete victory. For this savage onslaught on the chosen race in the time of their greatest weakness, God determined that He would utterly destroy the Amalekites, a threat which was executed in the reigns of Saul and David.

**4. The Visit of Jethro.**—The people having now arrived at the land of Midian where Jethro dwelt, the Midianite prince paid a visit to Moses, bringing with him his wife and sons. Seeing that Moses was wearied in sitting all day to decide the disputes of so great a multitude, Jethro advised him to appoint inferior judges to decide common disputes, leaving great and difficult matters to be brought before himself. Moses adopted the advice of his father-in-law, and chose a number of able men to assist him in the work of judging the people.

**5. The Israelites Come to Sinai.**—The Israelites had now come to the place where they were to perform the



religious worship they had spoken of to King Pharaoh. At Mount Sinai, they received the law which was to govern them as long as they remained a nation, which was also to make them a holy nation, witnesses for the truth of God, amid surrounding idolatry and error.

### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

1. What particulars are given concerning the passage of the Red Sea in the 77th Psalm?
2. What is the origin of the word "manna?" State the regulations made for gathering it.
3. What remarkable incident occurred at Rephidim? Quote the passage in the 95th Psalm referring to it.
4. Show how the victory of the Israelites over the Amalekites illustrates the power of prayer.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GIVING OF THE LAW FROM MOUNT SINAI.

1. **The Ten Commandments proclaimed.**—When the Israelites had arrived at Sinai, they encamped in front of the mountain, and were directed to sanctify themselves three days, in order to receive a covenant from God. The whole of the mountain was to be regarded as holy, and any man or beast touching it was to be put to death. On the morning of the third day, Moses led the people out of their encampment to meet with God. A smoke went up from the mountain like the smoke of a furnace; a great earthquake shook it violently; and the sound of a trumpet was heard continually growing louder and louder. Then God proclaimed the Ten Commandments; and when He had ended, the people implored Moses to declare to them the commands of God. "Let not God speak with us," said they, "lest we die." In answer to this prayer, Moses, with Joshua his servant, went to the top of the

mountain to receive the law from God, and was absent from the people forty days, leaving Aaron and Hur to occupy his place.

**2. The People worship a Golden Calf.**—Impatient at the long absence of their leader, the people summoned Aaron to make them gods to go before them, stating that they knew not what had become of Moses. Aaron, having received from them a supply of their golden earrings, made a molten calf, the image of the Egyptian idol, Apis, which he proclaimed to be the god that had delivered them from the Egyptian bondage. God, seeing their idolatry, directed Moses to return instantly to the camp. When he saw the calf, and the people dancing round it, his anger became great, and he cast the two tables of stone, on which the law was written, out of his hands, and broke them in pieces. He then took the golden calf, burnt it in the fire, ground it to powder, mixed it with water, and made the people drink of it. Calling out, "who is on the Lord's side?" his own tribe, the tribe of Levi appeared, and he commanded them to slay the idolaters, sparing neither friend nor relation. Three thousand of the people were thus put to death.

**3. The Second Delivery of the Law.**—Having hewed two tables of stone similar to the first, Moses went again to the summit of Sinai, where he remained forty days as at the first, without partaking of food or drink. At the end of that time, God having again written the Ten Commandments on the two tables of stone, Moses came down to the people. But from contact with the Divine presence, his face shone with so dazzling a radiance, that he was obliged to cover it with a veil when he appeared in public.

**4. The Building of the Tabernacle.**—The work of building the tabernacle was entrusted to Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan. The people were invited to contribute the materials for its erection, the greater portion of which came from the gifts bestowed upon them by the Egyptians to hasten their departure. The word tabernacle means *tent*; and in this

structure, God condescended to dwell among the people. It was a building of an oblong shape, surrounded by hangings of fine linen. There was a court outside it, and inside it was divided into two parts, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. In the court were placed the altar of burnt offering, on which were offered the morning and evening sacrifices, and the brazen laver, a large vessel containing water, in which the priests washed their feet before commencing their sacred duties. In the Holy Place, there were the altar of incense, the table of shewbread (on which twelve cakes were placed afresh every week), and the golden candlestick. In the Holy of Holies, there was only the ark of God, a kind of chest or box, about four feet long and two feet wide, containing the two tables of stone, and, at later periods, a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The lid of the ark formed the mercy seat, and on each end of it was placed a golden image, representing cherubim facing each other, and bending over the ark.

**5. The Priests and Levites.**—In the days of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the eldest son, or he that inherited the blessing, was priest over the chosen family. Now, however, a whole tribe was chosen to conduct the service of God, and the tribe of Levi was selected, because the Levites were the first to respond to the appeal of Moses when the people were worshipping the golden calf. Thus the curse pronounced on Simeon and Levi for their cruelty, "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel," was changed in the case of Levi, for the subsequent good conduct of that tribe, into a blessing. The Levites were scattered, it is true, but it was because they might act as servants of God, and instructors of the people. Forty-eight cities were assigned to the Levites on the settlement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. It was their duty to assist the priests in the performance of the worship of the tabernacle, and to instruct the people in the law. In this latter respect, the Levites were, so to speak, the schoolmasters of the people.

The priests were likewise of the tribe of Levi, but this order was confined to one family of that tribe, the family of Aaron. Thus every priest was also a Levite; but every Levite was not a priest. Their chief duty was the offering of sacrifices, burning incense, and other parts of the ritual of the tabernacle. The High Priest was the head of the priesthood, and was at first descended in a direct line from Aaron, who was the first High Priest. For the sin of the house of Eli, however, another family was selected, and from this time the High Priest, though always selected from among the priests, was not always the nearest in descent to the first founder of the priesthood. The priests and Levites had each a distinctive dress. The High Priest also had a peculiar dress, on the front of which, spreading over his chest, was the breast-plate, having on it twelve precious stones, with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on them. These stones constituted most probably the Urim and Thummim, by which the High Priest sought counsel of God. The High Priest was the only person allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, and he only once a-year, on the great Day of Atonement.

**6. The Sacred Seasons.**—The three great feasts in the year were—1, *The Feast of the Passover*, corresponding with our Easter; 2, *the Feast of Pentecost*, corresponding with our Whitsuntide; and 3, *the Feast of Tabernacles*, which took place in the autumn, when the fruits of the earth were gathered in. During this last feast, the people left their houses and lived in tents, to bring forcibly to their remembrance their life in the wilderness during the forty years' wandering.

*The Day of Atonement* was the one great fast of the year. It took place in the autumn, five days before the feast of tabernacles. The High Priest, on this day, entered the Holy of Holies, and made a solemn atonement for the sins of the people.

There was also the weekly Sabbath, and other feasts connected with it, as the *Feast of the New Moon*, which was kept at the beginning of each month, the *Sabbatical*

*year*, i.e., the Sabbath of the seven years, which occurred every seven years, and the *year of Jubilee*, which took place every fiftieth year. In the year of Jubilee, every slave was set free, and land that had been sold in the previous forty-nine years, was given back to its original possessor.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

1. What tribe answered to the appeal of Moses at the worship of the golden calf? What reward was given it for this service?
2. What is the meaning of the word "tabernacle?" State the furniture of the court of the tabernacle, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies.
3. What was the ark? In what part of the tabernacle was it placed? What were its contents?
4. Name the three great feasts in the Jewish year? What two Christian feasts occur at the same time of the year?
5. What was the great Day of Atonement? What was the duty of the High Priest on this day?



### CHAPTER V.

#### THE MARCH FROM MOUNT SINAI TO KADESH BARNEA, AND THE FORTY YEARS' WANDERING.

1. **Events at Taberah, Kibroth-hattaavah, and Hazeroth.**—The Israelites remained in their camp at Mount Sinai more than a year. When the building of the tabernacle, and the delivery of the law were completed, they were commanded to set forward on their march towards the Promised Land. When the priests bearing the ark commenced the march, Moses said, "Rise up, Lord, let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." When in the evening they set it down for the night's repose, he said, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." As they went

forward from place to place, their journey was marked by continual murmurings. Soon after they left Sinai, their dissatisfaction was punished by a destructive fire, which was quenched at the prayer of Moses. From this circumstance, the name of the place was called Taberah, *i.e.*, the burning. Then the mixed multitude, which came with them out of Egypt, sighed for the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, and the onions, they had there in abundance, and complained that their souls were dried up, the manna not being sufficient to nourish them. This feeling prevailed to such an extent that there was a general weeping, each man in the door of his tent, the burden of their moaning being, "Give us flesh that we may eat!" Moses complained to God that the government of so vast a multitude was too great a responsibility for him, and God, in answer to his prayer, appointed a council of seventy elders, who should share with him the Divine spirit, and assist him in ruling the people. Two of these elders remaining in the camp, while the others were in the tabernacle, began to prophecy, and Joshua, jealous for the honour of Moses, brought the news to him, saying, "My lord Moses, forbid them!" The answer of the great lawgiver is beautiful from its meekness and unselfishness, "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them." In answer to the tears and cries of the people, a flight of quails was sent into the camp, "but while the meat was yet in their mouths, the heavy wrath of God came upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them, and smote down the chosen men that were in Israel" (Psalm lxxviii. 31). From this occurrence, the place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, *i.e.*, "the graves of lust."

At Hazeroth, the next halting-place, Miriam and Aaron murmured against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman (probably Zipporah) he had married; and they claimed to be equal in position and authority with him. The leprosy of Miriam was a signal punishment for this offence; but at the prayer of Moses she was healed.

**2. The Spies sent from Kadesh Barnea: they bring back an Evil Report.**—Kadesh Barnea was the next point of the journeyings at which anything of importance took place. Here twelve spies were selected, one for each tribe, to explore the land of Canaan, and report what they had seen. After an absence of forty days, they returned, saying the land was a good land, "flowing with milk and honey," but that the people were very strong, and of great stature, so that they seemed but as grasshoppers in comparison with them. The people were so grieved at these tidings, that they lay weeping all night. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, disagreed with this part of the report, and said that with God's help they should be able to subdue the inhabitants; but the people were so angry with them, that it was proposed to stone them. This rebellious spirit, which had so often before shown itself among the people, aroused the wrath of God, who determined that as they had now tempted Him in the wilderness ten times, they should be punished by wandering in it all their lives, and that none of them except Joshua and Caleb, the two faithful spies, should enter the Promised Land. As a sign of God's displeasure, the ten spies who brought back the evil report were consumed by a plague. Then the multitude, rushing from one extreme to the other, confessed their sins, and said they would go up and conquer the land. In spite of the warning of Moses, they proceeded to attack the Canaanites and Amalekites in the valley, but they were defeated and driven back with loss.

**3. The Forty Years' Wandering: the Rebellion of Korah: Aaron's Rod buds.**—Very little is told us of the life of the Israelites during the wandering of the forty years. From Amos v. 25, 26, and other passages, it would appear that they fell back into idolatry. Some few incidents are recorded as standing out from the plain course of their ordinary life. To show the strictness of the law regarding the Sabbath, we are told that a man was stoned for gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath day. Korah, a Levite, joined with Dathan and Abiram, of the

tribe of Reuben, in a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Reuben being Jacob's eldest son, Dathan and Abiram, as the leading men of that tribe, thought that they were the rightful leaders of the people; while Korah, of the tribe of Levi, was jealous of the dignity of Aaron. These three chiefs were joined by 250 of the leading men among the people. As they claimed for themselves the office of the priesthood, these 250 men were ordered to provide themselves with censers, and appear before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle. Moses then declared that the issue of this controversy would be decided by the events that should follow. If the leaders of this rebellion died the common death of all men, God had not spoken by him; but if the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, the people would perceive how greatly they had offended Jehovah. Then the earth opened, and swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their families and all that they had; while fire from the Lord burnt up the 250 men that offered incense. But this terrible judgment failed to awe the rebellious multitude, who the next day brought a charge against Moses, that he had slain the people of the Lord. God, being very angry with the people, sent a pestilence among them that was destroying them rapidly, when Aaron, with his censer, ran and stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed. To determine once for all the family of the priesthood, twelve rods, one for every tribe, were placed in the tabernacle before the ark, the rod for the tribe of Levi having on it the name of Aaron. In the morning, it was found that Aaron's rod had budded, blossomed, and borne almonds. It was therefore laid up in the ark as a perpetual testimony of Aaron's Divine appointment to the priesthood.

4. **The Sin of Moses and Aaron.**—The last great event of the forty years' wanderings, was the sin which Moses and Aaron committed, for which they were forbidden to enter the Promised Land. The people, murmuring for water, Moses and Aaron were commanded to speak to the rock, and it should yield a supply; but instead of doing



this, Moses struck the rock, using angry and impatient words, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" This occurrence is explained in the Book of Psalms in the following manner, "They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes. Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips."

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V.

1. What words did Moses say at the commencement and end of the day's march in the wilderness?
2. What are the meanings of Taberah, and Kibroth-hattaavah?
3. How do you account for Dathan and Abiram rebelling against Moses?
4. How was Aaron's appointment to the priesthood confirmed?
5. How is the sin of Moses, which excluded him from the Promised Land, explained in the Book of Psalms?

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### CHAPTER VI.

#### THE END OF THE WANDERINGS, AND THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN.

1. **The Death of Aaron.**—When the disobedient generation that had come out of Egypt were all dead, at the end of the forty years of wandering, we find the Israelites once more encamped at Kadesh Barnea, which had most likely been their head-quarters during the whole period. Here Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, died, and was buried, and it was here that Moses and Aaron committed the sin for which they were shut out from the land of Canaan. When they had proceeded a little further to Mount Hor, the Divine message came that there Aaron was to die, and be succeeded in his office, as High Priest, by Eleazar his son. Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar, therefore, proceeded to the top of the mountain, where Moses

stripped Aaron of his priestly garments, and put them on Eleazar, his son, after which Aaron died, and Moses and Eleazar came down without him. The people honoured, with a mourning of thirty days, him who had been the associate of Moses in the great deliverance from Egypt, by whose mouth were spoken those terrible threatenings that preceded the infliction of each of the plagues.



MOUNT HOR.

2. **The Serpent in the Wilderness.**—The people were now led backward some distance by the Red Sea, and “the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.” They also complained that there was no bread, and no water, and their soul loathed “this light bread,” meaning the manna. To punish them for their murmuring, fiery serpents were sent among them, which destroyed many of them. On their confessing their sins, Moses was told to make a serpent of brass, and set it on a pole, so that any one who was bitten, by looking on it, might be healed. Our Lord refers to this incident in a discourse recorded in the gospel of St. John, “As Moses lifted up the

serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (St. John iii. 14, 15).

**3. War with Sihon and Og.**—The Israelites were now approaching the river Jordan, which forms the eastern boundary of the land of Canaan. To enter the Promised Land from this quarter, they would have to pass through the territory of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had previously driven out the Moabites from this district, and established there an Amorite tribe from the other side of the Jordan. As this was no part of the Land of Promise, Moses sent messengers to Sihon requesting permission to pass through it, but he refused, and met the Israelites in battle at Jahaz, where he was utterly defeated, and his land taken. Further north was the territory of Og, king of Bashan, a giant of enormous stature, who, with his people, came out against the Israelites at Edrei, and was slain, and his land conquered.

**4. Balak and Balaam.**—The Israelites now made their last encampment on the eastern side of the Jordan in the plains of Moab. Though the Moabites, descended from Lot, were a kindred race to the Israelites, and no harm was intended against them, yet their king, after the defeat of Sihon and Og, could not view without alarm so powerful a body of men resting in his land. He, therefore, took counsel with the elders of the Midianites, a tribe of people dwelling near him, and as the result of their deliberations, sent an embassy to a famous prophet, named Balaam, who dwelt at Pethor, a place on the other side of the river Euphrates. God, refusing Balaam leave to accompany the men, he sent them back to Balak, but the Moabite king sent a still more honourable and influential body, offering him high advancement and great riches as the reward of his compliance. Again Balaam consulted God, who this time gave him the permission he sought, on the strict condition that only the words He put in his mouth, he should speak. But Balaam still went with the hope of cursing the Israelites, and thus

obtaining the rewards which Balak offered ; so an angel met him in the way, with his sword drawn, in order to oppose him, and warn him that he was proceeding on a dangerous errand. The ass saw the angel, but Balaam did not ; and as the animal turned aside to avoid the sword, he angrily struck it again and again. At last, the power of speech was given to the ass, who complained of the harsh treatment he had received ; and when Balaam had replied in angry terms, his eyes were opened, and he saw the angel with the drawn sword standing before him as his adversary. The erring prophet fell flat on his face with fear and trembling ; but was still enjoined to continue his journey, the one condition again being enforced, " Only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak."

**5. Balaam's First Blessing.**—On arriving at the Moabite country, Balaam warned Balak not to place too high hopes on his coming ; and directed him to build seven altars, and sacrifice on each altar, a bullock and a ram. After the seven sacrifices had been offered, God put a word in Balaam's mouth, but it was a word of blessing and not of cursing. " How shall I curse," he said, " whom God hath not cursed, or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel ? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his !"

**6. Balaam's Second and Third Blessings.**—Balak was very indignant that the prophet whom he had hired to curse his enemies, had blessed them so fervently, and Balaam, vexed at the part he was compelled to act, consented to be present at a second series of sacrifices, and see if there would be any change in the Divine message. At the high place of Pisgah, Balak built seven altars, offering on each altar a bullock and a ram, and God put another word in Balaam's mouth, a word of rebuke to himself and the Moabite king. " God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it, or hath He

spoken, and shall he not make it good." At a third series of sacrifices, Balaam was compelled to utter a still more glorious blessing, upon which Balak, in hot anger, sent him back to his place, telling him he had intended to advance him to great honour, but the Lord had kept him back from honour. Before he departed, however, the prophet uttered a series of glowing prophecies as to the future destiny of the surrounding nations. Balaam afterwards died fighting in battle against the children of Israel.

7. **The Sin against Baal-peor.**—Balaam, though prevented by God's command from cursing the Israelites, did them all the harm he could, by advising the Midianites to draw them from their duty to God by joining in the impure rites of Baal-peor. The anger of God was shown in a plague that destroyed twenty-four thousand of the people. It was stayed by the prompt act of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the High Priest, who, when an Israelite brought into the camp a Midianitish woman, slew them both with a javelin, and thus vindicated the law of God from such daring defiance. The name of the offender was Zimri, a prince of the tribe of Simeon, and if, as is most likely, the 24,000 men were chiefly of that tribe, this will account for their diminished numbers in the census that was taken shortly afterwards. This crafty conduct of the Midianites, far more dangerous to the Israelites than open enmity, brought down on that tribe summary destruction. The Israelites went out to battle against them under the leadership of Phinehas, the warlike son of the High Priest, and they were slain in great numbers.

8. **Settlement of the Two Tribes and a Half.**—The tribes of Reuben and Gad, having a great multitude of cattle, requested Moses to allow them to settle in the land already conquered, east of the Jordan. Moses granted their desire, on condition that they should assist their brethren in the conquest of the land of Canaan. They, therefore, left their families and cattle in their new inheritance, going over Jordan with the other tribes to subdue the land. Half of the tribe of Manasseh was associated with them in the district east of the Jordan.

**9. The Death of Moses.**—The time had now come when the great Prophet and leader of the people was to die. Before his death, he gathered the Israelites together, and described God's dealings with them, and their own conduct from the time they had left Egypt. He gave a solemn charge to Joshua, whom God had appointed as his successor, bidding him be strong and of good courage, for God would certainly be with him. Although he was forbidden to enter the Promised Land, he was permitted to see it, for which purpose he ascended Mount Nebo, from the summit of which God showed him the whole extent of it. He was 120 years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his natural strength abated. No man knew his sepulchre, for he was buried by the hand of God in a valley in the land of Moab.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

1. Quote the verse in St. John's gospel referring to the brazen serpent.
2. What advice did Balaam give the enemies of Israel, which caused the destruction of many Israelites?
3. What acts are recorded of Phinehas, in connection with the sin at Baal-peor?
4. What tribes received their inheritance in the district east of the Jordan.

## PART III.

From the Death of Moses to the Establishment of the  
Monarchy. B.C. 1452-1095—A Period of 357 Years

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN, AND THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO.

1. **The Mission of the Spies.**—The first task of the Israelites after they had passed over Jordan would be the capture of Jericho. Joshua therefore resolved, while yet on the east side of Jordan, to send two spies to report concerning its strength and condition. The king of Jericho heard that these men were in his city, and they would have been discovered and slain, had not Rahab, a harlot, whose house was on the city wall, hidden them with some stalks of flax on the roof. In return for her protection, they engaged that when the Israelites took the city, she and her family should be saved alive. She was instructed to hang out of the window a line of scarlet thread, by which the invading army would recognise her house. Then she let them down by a cord outside the city, and they returned in safety to Joshua, and told him all things that befel them: Their most favourable tidings was the great fear which had seized the Canaanites at the approach of the invading army. "Truly," said they, "the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land, for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us." The conduct of Rahab is referred to in the New

Testament, as an instance of the influence of faith. (Hebrews xi. 31).

2. **The Passage of the Jordan.**—At the first great act in the leadership of Joshua, God resolved to magnify him, so that the people might fear him as they feared Moses all the days of his life. As the first proceeding under the direction of Moses was the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, so the first event in the career of Joshua was the miraculous passage of the river Jordan. It was in the month of April, in the spring-time of the year, that Joshua prepared to cross the Jordan, and at this time the river had overflowed its banks, owing to the melting of the snows of Lebanon, higher up, near its source. It was therefore more difficult to cross the river at this period, than any other time of the year. Joshua instructed the priests bearing the ark of the Lord to advance first. As soon as their feet touched the river, the water flowing from the north became a wall, and stood on an heap, while the water flowing towards the Dead Sea went on its course. The priests with the ark continued to advance till they reached the middle of the bed of the river; where they remained while the whole multitude of the Israelites passed over. Then twelve men, one man for each tribe, took twelve stones out of the bed of the river, with which they set up a memorial to keep in memory the passage for future generations. When the priests with the ark had left the bed of the river, the waters, which were heaped up, flowed down their usual channel, and the river resumed its ordinary appearance.

3. **The Renewal of Circumcision, and the Feast of the Passover.**—The generation which had been born in the wilderness not having been admitted to God's covenant by circumcision, Joshua was directed to see that this rite was now performed. The place where they were circumcised was called Gilgal, a word meaning "rolling away," probably because here was *rolled away* the reproach which had been cast upon them of being an uncircumcised people. Then, as this was the time for keeping the Passover, that feast was duly observed, the



first time it had been kept since the encampment at Sinai. The day after the Passover, the people ate of the old corn of the land, and the next day, there being no longer any necessity for a miraculous supply of food, the manna ceased.

**4. The Capture of Jericho.**—In the first great achievement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan, God resolved to teach them not to depend on their own strength, but on His Divine aid for deliverance. As Joshua was one day standing near Jericho, he saw a man standing over against him with his sword drawn in his hand, and in answer to his inquiry, the strange warrior said he had come to be captain of the army of the Lord. The mysterious visitor, who was none other than the Angel of the Covenant, then gave directions for the capture of Jericho. The Israelite army was to march round the city walls once every day for six days, the ark following them, preceded by seven priests bearing seven trumpets of ram's horns, which they were continually blowing. On the seventh day, this procession marched round the walls seven times, and at the end of the seventh time, the people shouted with a great shout, and the walls of the city fell down flat. Thus the city was given into the hands of the Israelites, and it was impossible for any of the inhabitants to escape. Rahab, however, and her family were saved according to promise. She married an Israelite named Salmon, and became the mother of Boaz, who was the great-grandfather of David. The city of Jericho being the first-fruits of the spoil of Canaan was accursed, or devoted to God. All the inhabitants were destroyed, together with their cattle; but the silver and gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, were cast into the sacred treasury. Joshua adjured a solemn curse on the man who should rebuild Jericho, which was fulfilled some hundreds of years afterwards in the case of Hiel, the Bethelite (1 Kings xvi. 34).

## QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

1. What favourable intelligence had the two spies to report from Jericho?
2. What does the word "Gilgal" mean? How do you account for the place being so named?
3. When was the Passover celebrated in the wilderness? What occurred after its first celebration in the Promised Land?
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## CHAPTER II.

## THE CAPTURE OF AI—THE LEAGUE WITH GIBEON—THE BATTLE OF BETHHORON.

1. **The Sin of Achan.**—The next city that the Israelites attacked was called Ai. It was not so large or powerful as Jericho, and only 3000 men were sent to take it. The king of Ai, however, easily drove them back with a loss of 36 men. This unexpected defeat cast a gloom on Joshua and all the people, as it was calculated to take away the terror that had formerly inspired the Canaanites, and make them combine in one great attack upon the invaders. Joshua and the elders of Israel therefore lay in dust before the ark, mourning. A message from God bade him arise, and revealed to him the cause of the disaster. In the capture of Jericho, contrary to the strict command of God, some one had taken of the spoil, and the offender must be discovered and punished, or the help of God would not be continued. It was found by casting lots that the guilty person was Achan, who confessed that he had purloined a Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold fifty shekels weight. The Israelites therefore, by command of Joshua, took him, and his family, and all that he had, with the unlawful spoil he had taken, and

brought them into the valley of Achor (trouble). There they were put to death by stoning, and afterwards burnt with fire. By such a terrible warning were the people taught the necessity of strict obedience to the Divine commands.

**2. The Capture of Ai.**—Joshua now himself directed the attack upon Ai. He placed 5000 men in ambush behind the city, while he, with the Israelite army, advanced to assault it. The King of Ai, encouraged by his former success, came out to meet him; Joshua pretended to be beaten, and, running back, drew the forces of the enemy some distance from the city gates. Then, raising his spear as a signal, the men in ambush came out of their hiding-place, entered the open gates, and set the city on fire. Joshua and his army then turned back on the pursuers, who were hemmed in on all sides by the Israelites, and easily destroyed. Thus the city of Ai was subdued, and its king was taken, and hanged on a tree. Joshua afterwards went to Shechem, in the middle of the land, and offered a solemn sacrifice to God on Mount Ebal. Then, having placed half the people on Mount Ebal, and half on Mount Gerizim, he read to them all the words of the law; those on Mount Ebal responded to the cursings, while those on Mount Gerizim answered to the blessings.

**3. The League with Gibeon.**—The cities of southern Canaan were now preparing to act in concert against the invaders, so as to avoid being attacked and subdued one by one, as Jericho and Ai. The inhabitants of one city, however, called Gibeon, resolved to attempt, by a crafty stratagem, to make a league with Joshua. Although their city was only a short distance from Ai, a deputation from the people came to Joshua with old sacks on their asses, old wine-skins rent and patched, old shoes, old garments, and mouldy bread, saying they had come from a very far country, to offer terms of mutual friendship and peace to the new nation, of whose victorious progress they had just heard. Believing their story, and neglecting to take the precaution of asking counsel of God, Joshua and the elders of Israel made a covenant with them.

Three days after, finding out the trick that had been played them, they resolved, as they had sworn unto them, not to break their oath; but, as a punishment for their deceit, they made them hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the service of the tabernacle.

4. **The Battle of Bethhoron.**—The kings of the five strong cities of southern Canaan, Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, were more terrified than ever on hearing of the defection of Gibeon, and resolved to take summary vengeance on the inhabitants for their desertion. The Gibeonites therefore sent a pressing entreaty to Joshua to observe the covenant he had just made, by protecting them from the vengeance of the Canaanites. Joshua therefore came upon the army of the five kings suddenly, marching up from Gilgal all night. The battle that took place was fierce and terrible, the arms of the Israelites being assisted by great hail-stones that were sent down from heaven in the face of their foes, and which killed more than those that fell by the sword. The day drawing to a close, while the battle was still in progress, Joshua called upon the sun and moon to stand still, and in answer to his prayer sufficient time was added to the day to enable him to complete the victory. The five kings being found hidden in a cave, before the battle was ended, were securely shut up by great stones which were rolled to the entrance, while a guard was placed near to prevent any attempt at deliverance. At the end of the day, they were brought out, and hanged on five trees. After this great victory, Joshua proceeded to subdue in detail the towns of southern Canaan, and afterwards returned with his army to the camp at Gilgal.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

1. By what stratagem was Ai taken?
2. By what negligence were the Israelites deceived by the inhabitants of Gibeon? How did they punish the Gibeonites for their deceit?
3. What Divine assistance was afforded the Israelites in the battle of Bethhoron? How was Joshua enabled to complete the victory?

## CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF LAKE MEROM—THE DIVISION OF THE  
LAND—AND THE DEATH OF JOSHUA.

1. **The Battle of Lake Merom.**—The kings of the north of Canaan, seeing that the southern part of the country had been subdued by the arms of the Israelites, formed a great league for their own safety under the leadership of Jabin, king of Hazor. This time a new element was introduced into the fighting, "they had horses and chariots very many." Joshua, following his usual tactics, came upon them suddenly, in their encampment near the waters of Merom, and utterly defeated them, chasing them as far as Great Zidon on the coast. He burned their chariots with fire, and houghed, or cut the hamstrings of their horses. He burned Hazor, and destroyed the other cities whose kings were in league with it. We are told that "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings," and we find from the speech of Caleb in the 14th chapter of the book of Joshua, that the conquest of the country occupied a period of five years.

2. **Allotment of the Land.**—We have seen already that Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, received their portions of territory on the east of Jordan before the death of Moses. There remained, therefore, nine tribes and a half among whom to divide the land of Canaan, as the tribe of Levi had forty-eight cities situated in various parts of the country for their inheritance. The powerful tribe of Ephraim was situated in the centre of the land, having on the north Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, and on the south Benjamin, Dan, Judah, and Simeon. The tribe of Simeon was placed at the extreme south, and though this must with Benjamin have been included in the kingdom of Judah, we find the kingdom of Israel described as that of the *Ten Tribes*. This is doubtless owing to the practice common in the earlier part of the Old Testament, of

choosing round numbers, easily remembered, to distinguish historical events. The tribe of Dan soon found out that it was pressed for room, the greater part of its territory being in the possession of the warlike Philistines. The Danites therefore established a colony in the extreme north of the land, the city being used to mark the northern boundary, "from Dan even to Beersheba." The tribes of Reuben and Gad on the east of Jordan soon began to break away in spirit from the national unity, and to take little interest in the fortunes of the tribes on the other side of the river. In the song of Deborah, it is made a subject of complaint that Reuben should abide among his sheep-folds to hear the bleatings of his flocks, rather than come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

**3. Caleb's Inheritance—the Tabernacle at Shiloh—the Cities of Refuge.**—While the land was being divided among the twelve tribes, Caleb, one of the two faithful spies, came to Joshua, and claimed Hebron as his inheritance, according to the promise made to him by Moses. It was made over to him on the condition that he dislodged the Anakims from the district. The tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, and the ark remained there within it till the time of Eli, when it was taken in battle by the Philistines. Though the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, Shechem was the civil capital, and it was there that Joshua assembled the tribes together to give them his parting instructions. Six cities of refuge were appointed to which any person who had killed another accidentally might flee, and be safe from the avenger of blood. Three of these were in Canaan proper, viz., Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and Hebron in the hilly district of Judah. Three of them were on the eastern side of Jordan, viz., Golan in Bashan, Ramoth in Gilead, and Bezer in the wilderness.

**4. The Dispute about the Altar.**—When the conquest of the land was completed, Joshua solemnly charged the two tribes and a half to be faithful to the commandments of God, and then dismissed them to their homes on the

other side of the Jordan. While yet, however, on the western side of the river, they built a great altar to testify to future generations their unity in race and religion with the other tribes. This matter being reported in a different light to their brethren of western Canaan, they assembled at Shiloh under the leadership of Phinehas, prepared to make war upon them for what they considered an act of disloyalty to God. The explanation they gave, however, proved entirely satisfactory, and the two tribes and a half named the altar Ed, *i.e.*, "witness," for they said it should be a witness between them and the Lord their God of their faithfulness to the covenant.



SHILOH.

**5. The Death of Joshua.**—The time had now arrived when the varied life of Joshua was to approach its end. He had been a slave, working in the Egyptian brick-fields; he was the personal attendant of Moses in the

forty years' wandering; and for the past twenty-five years he had himself governed the people, leading them to battle against their enemies, and dividing among them the Promised Land. Gathering them together at Shechem, he delivered to them his last solemn charge, reminding them how God had called Abraham from an idolatrous home, and had been with his descendants ever since, until now they had increased into a great nation, and were established in the land God had promised to their fathers. Having obtained from the people a solemn declaration that they would be faithful to God, Joshua took his leave of them, and shortly after died at the age of 110 years, and was buried in Timnath-Serah in Mount Ephraim. At the close of the book of Joshua, it is expressly mentioned that the bones of Joseph, which Moses carried out of Egypt according to his dying wish, were buried by the Israelites in Jacob's field at Shechem.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

1. What new element was introduced into Canaanite warfare in the battle of Lake Merom?
2. How long were the Israelites engaged in the conquest of the land of Canaan?
3. State the tribes whose possessions were (1), north of Ephraim; (2), south of Ephraim; (3), on the eastern side of the Jordan.
4. What town was given to Caleb for his inheritance? What claim did he advance for it?
5. Name the six cities of refuge. What inheritance was given to the tribe of Levi?
6. What was the civil capital of the country? Where was the tabernacle set up, and how long did the ark remain there?



## CHAPTER IV.

INCIDENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE TIMES OF THE  
JUDGES.

1. **General Condition of the People.**—Though the Israelites were now firmly planted in their new country, yet there were still districts where the Canaanites continued to maintain their position. As a general rule, the weaker party in a war takes refuge in the mountainous parts of the country, but in this instance, the Canaanites, owing to their possession of chariots and horses, were stronger in the plains. The zeal of the Israelites for the conquest of the land grew less after the death of Joshua, and instead of obeying the command of God in driving out the Canaanites, they showed a leaning towards their idolatrous practices. As a punishment for their want of energy, and want of faith, some of the native inhabitants were left among them to be thorns in their sides. As they fell away into idolatry, they were brought under the power of some one or other of the surrounding nations, who oppressed them, till, on their repentance, God raised up a champion to deliver them. These champions were called *judges*. In ordinary times, the tribes were governed by their elders, and God declared His will to the people through the High Priest. There were, however, cases of great disorder and lawlessness occasionally arising, and a few instances of such are given at the close of the Book of Judges, describing a state of things when there was no king in Israel, but every man did what was right in his own eyes.

2. **Micah and the Danites.**—A woman living in Mount Ephraim having lost 1100 shekels of silver, invoked a curse upon the thief, who proved afterwards to be her own son, a man named Micah. He acknowledged to his mother that it was he who had taken the silver, and restored to her the whole amount. She had dedicated this money, if it could be found, to the service

of God, and, as a partial fulfilment of her vow, sent 200 shekels to the founder, to make a graven image, and a molten image. Thus, at this time, people began to mix up the worship of God with idolatry. Having set up the images, Micah hired a young Levite to be his priest, giving him a yearly stipend of ten shekels of silver, suitable vestments, and his victuals. The tribe of Dan, having become too numerous for their territory, sent five spies to the north of Canaan to search out a place suitable for a colony. On their way northward, they passed through Mount Ephraim, and seeing the Levite in the house of Micah, desired him to ask the counsel of God as to the success of their enterprise. The answer was favourable, and going on their journey they found a place called Laish, where the inhabitants seemed easy and unsuspecting, and had not placed themselves under the protection of any powerful chief. Going back to their brethren, they reported what they had seen, and accordingly 600 men of the tribe of Dan started on an expedition against Laish. As they passed the house of Micah, the five spies told the company of the images that were within it, and of the Levite that ministered to the household; and they, thinking a priest in their new settlement would be desirable, persuaded him to accompany them, and he allowed them to remove the images. When he had discovered the robbery, Micah gathered a number of his neighbours together, and pursued the Danites; but they were too strong to be attacked, and he had to return without being able to recover his property. Having reached Laish, they smote the city and took it, and gave it a new name, calling it after their own tribe, Dan. The young Levite was appointed to be the priest of the new settlement, and his descendants continued to perform the same office till the time of the captivity. His name was Jonathan, and he was the grandson of Moses.

**3. The War against the Tribe of Benjamin.**—A Levite of Mount Ephraim had a concubine who had forsaken him, and returned to her father's house in

Bethlehem. The Levite therefore went to Bethlehem to bring her back again, and after staying at her father's house some days, started with her on his homeward journey. To go from Bethlehem to Mount Ephraim they must pass through the tribe of Benjamin, and as it was getting late when they arrived at Gibeah, one of the Benjamite cities, they resolved to remain there for the night, and found shelter in the house of an old man who took compassion on their loneliness. But some of the lowest people in the city beset the house, and treated the woman with such brutality, that she was found dead in the morning. The Levite thereupon divided her body into twelve pieces, and sent a portion to each of the tribes with the particulars of this dreadful outrage upon law and hospitality. The tribes assembled together under the leadership of Phinehas, the high priest, and demanded the punishment of the offenders, but the Benjamites, with characteristic obstinacy, refused to give them up. A terrible war ensued, in which the whole tribe of Benjamin was destroyed, with the exception of 600 men, who took refuge in the rock Rimmon. When time had given opportunity for reflection, the Israelites repented of their fierce anger, and wept that one of the tribes should be so nearly extinct in Israel. As they had sworn with a solemn oath not to give these men their daughters for wives, there seemed a difficulty how the tribe should again take root and grow. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead having refused to join in the war against Benjamin, they were punished for their disobedience, and their daughters given to the remnant of the Benjamites for wives. To supply the number that were still required, the Benjamites were allowed to attend a feast at Shiloh, and forcibly carry off any maidens they could find.

**4. The Story of Ruth.**—The adventures of Ruth which are contained in a little book that comes between the book of Judges and the first book of Samuel, shows the state of the country in a more pleasing light. A man named Elimelech, an inhabitant of Bethlehem, was

driven by famine into the land of Moab, with his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. While residing there, Mahlon and Chilion married two Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. During the ten years they dwelt in Moab, Elimelech and his two sons died. Then Naomi prepared to return to her own land, bidding her daughters-in-law remain in their native country. Ruth, however, refused to part from her, and accompanied her in her journey to her former home at Bethlehem. When they arrived there, it was the beginning of barley-harvest, and, following the instructions of Naomi, Ruth went to glean in the fields of Boaz, a wealthy inhabitant of Bethlehem, and a near kinsman to Elimelech. Boaz, visiting his reapers, noticed the lonely maiden, and directed them to let fall some handfuls by her to increase her store. Afterwards, finding that she was the daughter-in-law of his kinsman Elimelech, he decided to fulfil the law towards her by taking her for his wife. Ruth thus became the wife of Boaz. They had a son named Obed, who was the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

1. In what part of the country were the Canaanites strongest, the hills or the plains? Why was this the case?
2. What northern city did the Danites attack? What new name did they give it? What common phrase does this occurrence illustrate?
3. Who was the Levite that was appointed priest to the Danite colony? What celebrated person was he related to?
4. What relation was Ruth to David?

## CHAPTER V.

ISRAEL UNDER THE JUDGES—OTHNIEL, EHUD, SHAMGAR,  
DEBORAH, AND BARAK.

1. **Othniel, the First Judge.**—The first enemy that oppressed the Israelites was Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, who ruled in the country between the Euphrates and the Tigris. After he had kept the people in bondage eight years, he was defeated by Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's nephew, and the land had rest forty years.

2. **Ehud, the Second Judge.**—The Israelites having fallen into idolatry on the death of Ehud, God delivered them into the hand of Eglon, the king of Moab, who had strengthened himself by a league with the Ammonites and Amalekites. Eglon crossed the Jordan, and occupied the place where Jericho formerly stood. After an oppression which lasted eighteen years, Eglon was slain by Ehud, a left-handed Benjamite, who had obtained a private interview with him on the pretence of having a Divine message to impart to him. The Israelites then rose against their Moabite oppressors, who fled to the fords of the Jordan, and were there captured and slain. The land had rest after this deliverance for the long period of eighty years, and it is probably within this period that the exploits of Shamgar, the third judge, must be included.

3. **Shamgar, the Third Judge.**—Shamgar, the son of Anath, the third judge, delivered the Israelites from an incursion of the Philistines. He showed his great strength by killing 600 of them with an ox-goad, an exploit that may be compared with some of the feats of Samson.

4. **Deborah, the Fourth Judge.**—The Israelites, having again fallen into idolatry, were suffered to fall under the tyranny of Jabin, king of Canaan, and Sisera his captain. This invasion came from the direct north; the capital city

of Jabin was Hazor, near lake Merom; and the residence of Sisera, his captain, Harosheth of the Gentiles, a place situated probably further south. This Jabin is the second of that name of the Canaanite kings mentioned in the Bible; a former Jabin was defeated by Joshua (Joshua xi. 1). This oppression was more grievous than any of the former, and it lasted twenty years. Sisera had a large and powerful army, the chief strength of which lay in the iron chariots, of which he had nine hundred in number. The possession of chariots and horses gave the Canaanites a great advantage over the Israelites, who were forbidden to use them, lest they should be drawn into commercial relations with Egypt, from which both chariots and horses were imported. The Israelites were governed at this time by Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, who administered judgment under a tree known as "the palm-tree of Deborah," between Ramah and Bethel. Acting under the directions of God, she summoned Barak, the son of Abinoam, from Kedesh-Naphtali, to conduct the war against Sisera, but he refused to take sole command of the army, adding, however, that he would act in conjunction with herself. She yielded to his wish, and consented to accompany him, telling him that the battle would not, for this reason, redound to his honour, for God would sell Sisera into the hands of a woman. Having assembled an army of 10,000 men on Mount Tabor, Deborah and Barak descended to the plain, prepared to meet the Canaanites, and give them battle in the place where they could use their chariots and horses with such terrible effect. But the God that putteth down the mighty from their seat, had determined to bring to an end the wickedness of Sisera, and by sending a violent storm of hail and rain, which flooded the plain, He made the 900 chariots in which he trusted, a hindrance instead of a help. The chariot wheels sank in the soft mud, and were thus rendered difficult of movement, while "the horse hoofs were broken by means of the prancings, the prancings of the mighty ones." The vast army of Sisera was com-

pletely destroyed, and the general, hastily dismounting from his chariot, fled away on his feet, and sought refuge in the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite. (The Kenites were the tribe of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses; they joined the Israelites in the wilderness, and accompanied them to the land of Canaan.) Having given him refreshment, and lured him to slumber, Jael drove through his temples one of the nails which fastened down the cords of her tent, and thus destroyed the enemy of God and Israel. Deborah afterwards composed a triumphal ode in honour of this great victory.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V.

1. On what pretence did Ehud obtain access to the presence of Eglon? Where were the Moabites captured and slain?
2. What exploit is recorded of Shamgar?
3. What formed the chief strength of Sisera's army? How were these deprived of their power, and turned against the Canaanites in the battle that took place?
4. Who were the Kenites? How was it that they dwelt in the midst of the Israelites?

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### CHAPTER VI.

#### ISRAEL UNDER THE JUDGES—GIDEON, THE FIFTH JUDGE.

**1. The Midianite Oppression.**—After the death of Deborah, the Israelites forsook God, and worshipped Baal, and they were therefore suffered to fall into the hands of the Midianites and Amalekites, who oppressed them seven years. Every year, numerous bands of these marauders invaded the land, sweeping away all the produce of the ground, and extending their inroads as far south as Gaza. Driven from their own homes, the people took refuge "in the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds."

**2. An Angel visits Gideon.**—One day, as Gideon was threshing wheat near his wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites, an angel appeared to him, and assured him that God was with him. Gideon raised the objection, that if God were on their side, why had He permitted the Amalekites to oppress them? The angel replied that the hour of deliverance was at hand, and that he was the person appointed by God to effect it. As this was the greatest oppression of the Israelites since they came out of Egypt, Gideon, like Moses, hesitated to take the position assigned him, alleging that his family were poor in Manasseh, and he was the least in his father's house. The angel replied, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Gideon now began to think that his visitor was a Divine messenger, and so brought to him a suitable offering, a kid, with cakes of unleavened bread, which he presented under the oak. The angel bade him lay them on a rock, and, having touched them with the point of his staff, fire came out of the rock, and burnt them up. The angel then departed, leaving Gideon in great terror at having been in the presence of so exalted a being; but he was comforted, and built an altar to the Lord on the spot where the sacrifice had been offered.

**3. The Destruction of Idols.**—The cause of the oppression, the idol-worship that existed even in the house of the deliverer, must be removed, before the judgment it had provoked could be averted by his hand. Gideon was therefore commanded to throw down the altar of Baal, belonging to his father, Joash, and to cut in pieces the wooden image of the goddess Ashtaroth. He did this in the night, for fear of opposition by day, and in the morning the men of the city were surprised and indignant at what they regarded as a wicked and irreligious act. It was soon found out that Gideon was responsible for it, and his death was demanded of his father as a punishment for his impiety. But Joash replied that they were insulting Baal, by supposing that he was not able to avenge the wrong that had been done him, so from that



time Gideon received a new name, "Jerub-Baal, or "let Baal plead."

4. **The Miraculous Signs.**—The Midianites and Amalekites having made a fresh invasion, Gideon summoned his countrymen to resist their progress. It was the northern tribes, Manasseh, Zebulon, Asher, and Naphtali, that responded to his appeal. Still doubtful of success in his difficult enterprise, he requested and received signs from God, that the Divine aid would be afforded him; first, a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor was wet, while the earth around it was dry, and, secondly, the same fleece was dry, while the ground near it was wet.

5. **The Reduction of Gideon's Army.**—Gideon's army at this time consisted of 32,000 men, and it was encamped by the well of Harod, *i.e.*, "the well of trembling." But God was determined to teach the people that this great deliverance, the greatest since the redemption from Egyptian bondage, was not effected by their own power. The proclamation, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead," induced 22,000 men to go back to their homes. The remaining 10,000, being yet too many, were taken to the well of Harod to drink, and by a singular device, a further reduction was effected. Those who knelt down to drink were sent back; while the 300 who lifted the water to their mouths in their hands were chosen for the arduous enterprise.

6. **The Visit to the Midianite Camp.**—Gideon was now directed, in company with his servant, Phurah, to visit the camp of Midian by night, in order that his faith might be strengthened by what he should there witness. As they stealthily approached the outskirts of the vast horde, Gideon heard a man telling his companion of a dream he had dreamed, how that "a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came into a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along." The other man replied that the destruction that this dream portended would be wrought by the

sword of Gideon, showing that already the Midianites were stricken with terror at his name.

7. **The Victory.**—Gideon then divided his men into three companies of a hundred each, and gave every man a trumpet, a torch, and a pitcher. At the middle watch of the night, they approached the Midianite camp, having their torches hidden within their pitchers. At the sound of Gideon's trumpet, from three quarters the astonished multitude heard loud blasts of trumpets, the crashing of pitchers, while torches blazed, and the war-cry of the Israelites burst upon their ears, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The Midianites were seized with a panic of terror and distraction. Every man's sword was turned against his fellow, and "all the host ran, and cried, and fled." Those who escaped destruction in the slaughter that took place, fled to the Jordan fords, hoping by that means to ensure their safety. But the Ephraimites intercepted many of them there, and slew great numbers, including two chiefs, Oreb and Zeeb. The two kings of Midian, however, Zebah and Zalmunna, contrived to escape with a considerable number of their followers. As Gideon was pursuing the routed army, the jealousy of the Ephraimites threatened to interrupt his progress. They complained that the war had been undertaken without consultation with them; but Gideon disarmed their anger by mildly replying that their exploits were greater than his own, "Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?" Gideon, with his 300 men, then crossed the Jordan, "faint, yet pursuing." The inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel refused to supply him with provisions on his march, and so were punished on his victorious return. He beat down the tower of Penuel, and with thorns and briers he "taught" the men of Succoth. Already 120,000 of the Midianites had been slain, but the remainder, 15,000, with the two kings, had fled to Karkor on the east of the Jordan, where they rested in fancied security. There Gideon found them, and utterly defeated them, capturing their kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, whom he afterwards put to death.

**8. Effect of the Victory.**—The effect of this victory on the minds of the Israelites was very great. They offered to make Gideon king, and to establish the kingdom in his family, but he refused their proposal on the ground that Jehovah was already their king. He asked them, however, to give him the golden earrings they had taken from the defeated Midianites, and with these he made an ephod, doubtless intended for use in the service of Jehovah, but which proved a snare to the Israelites, accustoming them, as it did, to irregular and unauthorised modes of worship.

**9. References to this Deliverance in the Psalms and Prophets.**—In the eighty-third Psalm, verses 11 and 12, we read, “Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb; yea, all their princes as Zebah and Zalmunna: who said, let us take to ourselves the houses (or rather pastures) of God in possession.”

In the ninth chapter of Isaiah, verse 4, we read, “For Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.”

In the tenth chapter of Isaiah, verse 26, this great victory is mentioned in connection with the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. “And the Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; and as His rod was upon the sea, so shall He lift it up after the manner of Egypt.”

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

1. What surname was given to Gideon for destroying the altar of Baal, and what is its meaning?
2. What two signs did God give Gideon that He would deliver Israel from the Midianites?
3. How was Gideon's army reduced from 32,000 to 300 men?
4. Gideon's 300 men had no weapons of war. How then were the Midianites destroyed?
5. What passages in the Psalms and Prophets refer to this great deliverance?

## CHAPTER VII.

## ISRAEL UNDER THE JUDGES.—ABIMELECH AND JEPHTHAH.

**1. Rule of Abimelech—Jotham's Parable.**—The Israelites after the death of Gideon again fell into idolatry. One of Gideon's sons, named Abimelech, whose mother was a native of Shechem, persuaded the Shechemites to make him their king, and for some years he reigned over Shechem and the neighbouring district. The first act of his reign was the murder of all his seventy brethren except one, the youngest, whose name was Jotham, who, having escaped, went to Mount Gerizim, and by means of a parable rebuked the people of Shechem for the choice that they had made. This parable, which is the oldest on record, runs as follows:—

“The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said to the olive-tree, ‘Reign thou over us?’ But the olive-tree said unto them, ‘Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?’

“And the trees said to the fig-tree, ‘Come thou, and reign over us?’ But the fig-tree said unto them, ‘Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?’

“Then said the trees unto the vine, ‘Come thou, and reign over us?’ And the vine said unto them, ‘Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?’

“Then said all the trees unto the bramble, ‘Come thou, and reign over us?’ And the bramble said unto the trees, ‘If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.’”

**2. End of Abimelech's Reign.**—When he had concluded his parable, Jotham reproached the men of Shechem for their ingratitude to the house of Gideon,

and foretold that they would be punished for their folly by the bramble-king they had chosen, who in his turn should receive the reward of his evil deeds at their hands. This was fulfilled three years afterwards, when the Shechemites, having rebelled against Abimelech, he destroyed their city, slew all the inhabitants, and sowed the foundation with salt. As he was taking a neighbouring place named Thebez, a woman threw a piece of a millstone at his head with such force that it broke his skull. He hastily called out to his armour-bearer to kill him with his sword, so that it might not be said that a woman slew him. Abimelech is reckoned as the sixth judge.

3. **Tola and Jair.**—Tola, the seventh judge, who resided in Mount Ephraim, governed the people twenty-three years. He was succeeded by Jair, a Gileadite, who ruled the people twenty-two years, and was the eighth judge.

4. **Jephthah, the Ninth Judge.**—The Israelites now fell into a number of idolatries, for besides Baal and Ashtarothe (the sun-god and the moon-god), they worshipped the gods of Syria, Zidon, Moab, Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines. They were consequently oppressed by two enemies at the same time, by the Ammonites on the north-east frontier in Gilead, and by the Philistines in the south-west. The Ammonites, not content with plundering the inhabitants of Gilead, crossed the Jordan and ravaged the territory of the western tribes, Judah, Ephraim, and Benjamin. At last a number of Israelites gathered themselves together in Gilead to oppose the enemy, and anxiously deliberated as to whom they should appoint for their captain. There was a mighty man named Jephthah, the son of Gilead, who was the chief of a band of outlaws, for his brethren had thrust him out of his home, and he now dwelt in an outlying district named Tob. They therefore sent messengers to him, offering him the command of the army, but he refused to accept this dangerous honour, unless they would engage to make him their ruler when he had

defeated the Ammonites. On their agreeing to do this, he placed himself at their head, and sent messengers to the king of Ammon demanding why he and his people did not ~~keep to their own land~~. The Ammonite chief replied that his people had been wrongfully thrust out of this country by the Israelites when they first came into Canaan; but Jephthah rejoined that it was the Amorites that were driven out, not the Ammonites, and that as Sihon, king of the Amorites, persisted in attacking them when they meant him no harm, his territory on his defeat was the lawful spoil of the conquerors. This explanation failing to have any weight with the King of Ammon, Jephthah prepared for the battle, and made an unfortunate vow, that, if he returned to his house in peace, the first thing that came out of his doors to meet him, he would offer as a sacrifice to God. In the battle that took place the Ammonites were utterly defeated, and their strength broken. But the victorious chief on returning home was met by his only daughter, whom, in accordance with his vow, he thought himself compelled to offer as a sacrifice to God. No sanction is given to this act of Jephthah in Holy Scripture, and when it says that the Spirit of God came upon him, it simply means that he was endued with Divine power to fight the enemies of Israel.

#### 5. Quarrel between the Ephraimites and Jephthah.

—The tribe of Ephraim, which had on a similar occasion quarrelled with Gideon, and had been pacified by that noble judge with a mild answer, now rebuked Jephthah for not having sought their assistance, and threatened to burn his house to the ground. Jephthah replied to their threat by stating in a plain manner the real facts of the case, upon which a civil war took place, in which the Ephraimites were defeated. Jephthah and the Gileadites having secured the Jordan passes, detected the Ephraimite soldiers as they attempted to cross the river, by asking them to pronounce the word "Shibboleth." If they pronounced it properly, they were allowed to pass; but any one who gave it thus "Sibboleth," was found out to

be an Ephraimite, and slain. Jephthah judged Israel for a period of six years.

6. **Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.**—After Jephthah three judges ruled in succession, of whom little is known except their names, and the periods of their rule. They were Ibzan of Bethlehem, who was the tenth judge, and ruled seven years; Elon, a Benjamite, who was the eleventh judge, and ruled ten years, and Abdon, who was the twelfth judge, and ruled eight years.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

1. Who was the bramble-king alluded to in Jotham's parable?
2. How did Abimelech meet with his death?
3. What historical question was argued between Jephthah and the Ammonites?
4. How were the Ephraimite fugitives detected at the Jordan fords in their quarrel with Jephthah?

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### CHAPTER VIII.

#### ISRAEL UNDER THE JUDGES—SAMSON.

1. **Birth of Samson.**—The Israelites, continuing their worship of the Philistine idols, were made to feel the burden of the Philistine oppression. The tribe of Dan being most exposed to the attacks of the invaders, suffered grievously from the incursions of the Philistines. Out of this tribe, consequently, the champion arose, who was devoted from his birth to the great work of the national deliverance. An angel of God appeared to Manoah and his wife, and told them they should have a son, who should be a Nazarite from his birth, and therefore must drink neither wine nor strong drink, and never allow a razor to come near his head. When the child was born he was named Samson, a word meaning *the sunlike*, or *the*

*strong.* As he grew up, the Spirit of God began to move him at times between Zorah, his native place, and Esh-taol.

**2. Samson marries a Philistine wife.**—Going down to Timnath, a Philistine city not far from Zorah, Samson saw one of the daughters of the Philistines, whom he persisted in marrying against the will of his parents. In one of his journeys thither, a young lion roared against him, but animated by the Spirit of the Lord, he rent the lion as he would have rent a kid, though he was without a weapon. Telling no one of his exploit, he examined the carcase of the lion on his next journey when the marriage was to be celebrated, and noticed that a swarm of bees had settled in it. He therefore took out of it some honey, which he ate as he went along. At the marriage feast, Samson proposed a riddle to his thirty Philistine companions, which he had made out of this incident, which ran thus, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Thirty sheets and thirty changes of raiment were to be given them if they discovered the answer, and they were to give him the same if they failed to find it out. As they were unable to solve the riddle, they threatened Samson's wife with summary vengeance, unless she could extort from him the meaning, and convey it secretly to them. Wearied with her entreaties, he told her the answer, which was, "what is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" and soon after they brought the same solution to him. Remarking "if they had not ploughed with his heifer, they had not found out his riddle," Samson went down to Askelon, slew thirty Philistines, and took their garments to give his thirty companions according to the agreement.

**3. Samson's great exploits.**—The father of Samson's wife, not caring probably for her Israelite husband, gave her to one of his Philistine companions. In revenge for this treatment, Samson caught three hundred foxes, or rather jackals, and, tying their tails together in couples, placed a firebrand between every two tails, and loosed



them in the standing corn of the Philistines. Not being able to punish the real author of this injury, they wreaked their vengeance on his father-in-law and his wife, burning them both to death. On hearing of this outrage, Samson smote them, hip and thigh, with a great slaughter, and then fled for refuge to the top of the rock Etam. There the Philistines in large numbers pursued him, and the men of Judah, inquiring the cause of this invasion, undertook to give the fugitive up. Having promised not to fall upon him themselves, Samson permitted his own countrymen to bind him with two new cords, but when they were about to deliver him to the Philistines, he broke them easily, and seizing the jawbone of an ass, slew a thousand of his enemies.

**4. The Death of Samson.**—Samson now went down to Gaza, and the Philistine inhabitants of that city watched diligently all the night, hoping to capture him in the morning. But at midnight, rising from his sleep, he took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, bar and all, and carried them up to the top of a hill near Hebron. Samson became next attached to a Philistine woman named Delilah, who was enticed by the lords of the Philistines to draw from him the secret of his great strength, offering her a large sum of money as a reward. Samson played with her questions for some time by giving her untrue answers, such as, that his strength might be overcome by binding him with seven green withes which had never been dried, or with new ropes that had never been used, or by weaving the seven locks of his hair to the beam, and fastening it with a pin. At last, finding these methods totally insufficient to secure him, she so wearied him with her reproaches, that he told her all his heart, and confessed that if his Nazarite vow were broken by the shaving of his head, his strength would depart from him, and he would become weak like another man. Having lured him to slumber, she caused the seven locks of his head to be shaven off, and when he awoke, he was no longer able to resist his foes. The Philistines, having taken him and put out his eyes,

brought him down to Gaza, bound him with fetters of brass, and made him to grind corn in the prison-house. When he had been in confinement some time, and his hair had begun to grow again, the Philistine lords gathered together a great assembly to offer sacrifices to their god Dagon, because, they said, that he had delivered Samson their enemy into their hands. When they had rendered thanks and praises to their idol, for his fancied achievement, they called for Samson, thinking him now powerless, to make sport for them. The fallen judge, having sought permission of his attendant to rest his hand on the pillars which supported the building, prayed earnestly that once more his great strength might return to him, and bowing himself with all his might on the two pillars, the walls of the building fell in, and crushed to death the three thousand Philistines who were there assembled. "So the dead which he slew at his death, were more than they which he slew in his life." He judged Israel for a period of twenty years.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

1. What were the chief conditions of a Nazarite's vow?
2. State Samson's riddle, and its answer.
3. How did Samson escape when he was shut up in Gaza?
4. State the result which followed the breaking of Samson's Nazarite vow.
5. How did Samson meet with his death? How long did he judge Israel?

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#### CHAPTER IX.

##### ISRAEL UNDER THE JUDGES—ELI AND SAMUEL.

1. **Eli, the Fourteenth Judge.**—While Samson was fighting the battles of his country against the Philistines, Eli, the high priest, governed the people as civil judge.

Little is recorded of his career, and that little is chiefly mixed up with the life of Samuel. The great fault of his life was his exalting his sons above God, for when they, being priests, made themselves vile, he did not restrain them. The better side of his character is seen in his meek submission to the will of God, and his reverential attachment to the ark of God. The close of his life will be found in connection with the following narrative.

**2. Samuel, the Fifteenth Judge: His Birth and Early Years.**—Elkanah, an inhabitant of Mount Ephraim, had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. By Peninnah he had several children, but Hannah was childless, and in a visit to the tabernacle at Shiloh at one of the great yearly feasts, she wept and prayed in bitterness of soul to God, vowing that if a son were granted her, she would dedicate him to God's service as a Nazarite from his birth. The High Priest, seeing her lips move without any sound proceeding from them, supposed that she was drunken, and forthwith proceeded to rebuke her, but on hearing the truth of the matter, he gave her his solemn benediction, adding a prayer that her petition might be granted. At the next yearly gathering, Hannah remained at her home, for in the meantime a son had been born to her, whom she named *Samuel*, a word meaning "asked of God." She would not, she said, go up to the tabernacle till the child was weaned, and then she would take him, that he might remain there constantly. On giving up her son, according to her vow, to the care of the High Priest, Hannah sung a song of praise to God, which in many points is similar to the song of the Virgin Mary at the birth of Christ. As Samuel grew up, he ministered to the Lord before Eli, the high priest, girded with a linen ephod. His mother visited him once a year at the annual sacrifice, when she brought him a little coat. After this, she had besides Samuel, three sons and two daughters.

**3. The Wickedness of Eli's sons—God reveals Himself to Samuel.**—The two sons of Eli, Hophni and

Phinehas, by their wicked conduct, brought the service of God into abhorrence. A prophet was therefore sent to Eli, denouncing God's judgment against his house, the immediate punishment being, that his two sons should die in one day. Soon afterwards, the same message, for the most part, was repeated in a vision from God to the youthful Samuel. At evening, when Eli and his youthful attendant had lain down to sleep, Samuel heard a voice calling him by name, which he took to be that of the High Priest. The call being again repeated, Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child, and instructed him to say when he heard it again, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." In the morning, Samuel feared to make known to Eli a revelation laden with such heavy tidings for himself and his family, but the High Priest insisted on hearing it, and when it was ended, meekly remarked, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." From this occurrence, all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

**4. The two First Battles of Ebenezer—The Ark of God taken.**—A fresh outbreak of hostilities now occurred between the Israelites and the Philistines, and in the first battle that took place, the Israelites were defeated with a loss of 4000 men. In order to ensure a victory, the people sent for the ark of God, thinking that if they took that to battle with them, their triumph would be certain. The Philistines were greatly cast down on hearing of the arrival of the ark in the Israelite camp, but they fought with the more determination and courage, and as God's presence did not on this occasion accompany its symbol, the Israelites were defeated with a loss of 30,000 men, Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were slain, and the ark of God was taken. The aged Eli was seated by the wayside, eagerly watching for some one who would tell him tidings of the battle. A Benjamite with clothes rent, and earth upon his head, narrated the sad story in four sentences, each falling on his heart with a heavier blow. "Israel is fled before the

Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons Hophni and Phinehas are dead, and the ark of God is taken." On hearing of the capture of the ark, he fell backward from off his seat, broke his neck, and died, for he was an old man, and heavy. At the time of his death he was 98 years old, and had judged Israel forty years.

**5. The Captivity and Return of the Ark.**—The Philistines, having taken the ark, conveyed it to one of their cities called Ashdod, and placed it in the temple of their god Dagon. The next morning, they found the idol had fallen to the ground with its face towards the ark, and having set it up again, the following morning, it was in the same position, with its head and the palms of its hands cut off. The inhabitants of Ashdod were also smitten with a loathsome disease. They therefore refused to keep the ark any longer, and it was sent on to Gath, where the people were punished in a similar manner. The ark was next sent to Ekron, but the men of that city piteously entreated their rulers to remove from them what had caused such terrible afflictions to their neighbours. On a council being assembled of priests and diviners, it was decided to return the ark of God to Israel, with a trespass offering of five golden mice, and five golden emerods. Having made a new cart, they placed the ark in it, with the golden offerings, yoked to it two milch cows, that had never before been in harness, and shut up their calves at home. As the cows, contrary to their instinct, took the road to the land of Israel, forsaking their calves, it was taken as a sign that the presence of the God of Israel was with the ark, and that the sickness which had stricken them was sent by Him. The cows proceeded till they arrived at Bethshemesh, where the inhabitants were busy reaping their wheat-harvest. The Levites took down the ark from the cart, cut in pieces the wood of the cart, and offered the cows as a burnt-offering to the Lord. The inhabitants of Bethshemesh having broken the law by looking into the ark (see Numbers iv. 20), were destroyed in large

numbers, and it was then sent forward to Kirjath-jearim, where it remained till David conveyed it to Jerusalem. The ark was in the land of the Philistines seven months.



KIRJATH-JEARIM.

**6. Third Battle of Ebenezer—Defeat of the Philistines.**—Twenty years now passed by, during which the Israelites remained under the yoke of the Philistines. At the end of that period, Samuel exhorted them to repentance, and they made a covenant with God to put away their idol worship, and return to His service. The national assembly, at which this decision was taken, was regarded by the Philistines as an act of hostility; and they therefore drew their forces together to engage in battle. The terrified Israelites implored Samuel not to cease his loud crying to God for them, and, in the contest which followed, his prayer was answered in the utter defeat of the Philistines by a violent thunderstorm from heaven. During the life of Samuel, the Philistines came

no more into the coasts of Israel, and the cities which they had formerly taken, they were compelled to give back. To keep in memory this great deliverance, Samuel set up a great stone on the battle-field, which he called Eben-ezer, or "the stone of help." All the three battles, however, which were fought on this field, are known by the same name.

**7. The People desire a King.**—Samuel was now becoming an old man, and his sons were engaged with him in his work of judging the people. He proceeded on circuit to hear causes, calling at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh. But his usual residence was at Ramah. At all these places, he established schools, which are known by the name of *Schools of the Prophets*, where young men were instructed in the sacred writings, and thus fitted to undertake the important duties connected with the prophetic calling. The sons of Samuel, Joel and Abiah, were corrupt judges, as they took bribes and perverted judgment. The people therefore clamoured for a king, who could judge them in times of peace, and lead them to battle in war. This request displeased Samuel, but God told him to grant them their desire, saying to him, "Hearken unto the voice of the people; they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me from reigning over them."

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX.

1. Who judged the people in civil matters during the career of Samson?
2. What song of praise in the New Testament may be compared with the song of Hannah?
3. What is the meaning of Ebenezer? How many battles took place on this site, and in whose favour did they terminate?
4. Into what Philistine cities was the ark taken? How long did it remain in the Philistine territory?
5. By what means were the Philistines defeated at the last battle of Ebenezer?
6. What places did Samuel call at in his circuit as judge? Where was his ordinary residence?
7. What were the names of Samuel's sons? State their character.

## PART IV.

From the Election of Saul to the Babylonian Captivity.  
B.C. 1095-588. A Period of 507 Years.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE REIGN OF SAUL.—B.C. 1095-1056.

1. **Saul selected by God as King.**—Saul, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, was the man chosen by God to be the future king of Israel. He was a man of imposing appearance, head and shoulders taller than any of the people, and in appointing him to the kingly office, God was giving the people such a king as they desired. Saul was brought into contact with Samuel while seeking his father's asses, which had strayed. He called at the house of the prophet to inquire the fate of his asses, and, at the same time, Samuel was informed by God that the person seeking him was the man that should be hereafter king. Taking a vial of oil, and pouring it upon his head, Samuel therefore anointed him to the office of king, and gave him signs by which he might know, of a certainty, that he was called to so high a destiny. He informed him that his father's asses were found, and Saul then returned to his own home, as the future king of the nation, though his appointment was not yet ratified by the people.

2. **Saul Elected by lot as King.**—A national assembly was gathered together at Mizpeh, for the election of a king. After rebuking the people for their want of faith in God, manifested in their desire for a monarchy, Samuel



directed the election to take place. Of the twelve tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken; of the families of that tribe, the family of Kish; of the family of Kish, his son Saul. On a search being made for the new king, he was found hidden among the baggage of the camp, but the people ran and fetched him, giving a loud and joyful shout, "God save the king." Some wicked people, however, despised Saul, and would not bring him the customary presents, saying, "How shall this man save us?" But he held his peace.

**3. War with the Ammonites.**—The first military exploit of the new king was in the defence of the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead. Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, came up against Jabesh-Gilead, and the inhabitants, unable to oppose him, offered to become his servants. Not content with this offer, however, he insisted that each person should also suffer the loss of his right eye, as a reproach to Israel. Having obtained a brief respite from this cruel fate, they sent messengers to their brethren on the other side of the Jordan, appealing for help. Saul, having heard the unhappy fate that threatened the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, assembled an army with which he utterly defeated the Ammonites, and thus avenged the insult that had been offered to Israel. In their gratitude for this deliverance, the people demanded the death of those men who had formerly despised Saul; but, with that generosity which ever marked his character, he interceded for them, declaring that on so joyful a day, no Israelite should be slain. Soon afterwards, Samuel called together an assembly at Gilgal to renew the kingdom. Having vindicated his own integrity, he declared to the people how great was their sin in demanding a king, and as a sign that God was angry with them for this conduct, a violent thunderstorm took place, which was the more remarkable as it occurred at a very unusual time—the period of wheat-harvest.

**4. Saul's First Act of Disobedience.**—The Philistines now made an attempt to recover the supremacy they enjoyed before the last battle of Ebenezer. Jonathan, Saul's

son, having smitten one of their garrisons at Geba, furnished them with a pretext for renewing hostilities. They assembled a vast army, with chariots and horses, which struck such terror into the hearts of the Israelites, that they hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in rocks, and pits. Samuel had directed Saul to await his coming before offering sacrifice, but as he came not within the appointed time, Saul himself offered the burnt-offering. For this act of disobedience to the command of God given through the prophet, it was announced that his kingdom should not continue, God having sought a man after His own heart, and commanded him to be captain over His people.

**5. Victory over the Philistines.**—The Israelite army was placed in a position of great disadvantage, for under the previous rule of the Philistines, no smiths were allowed to practice their calling in the land. So on the day of battle, none except Saul and Jonathan had swords or spears; while the Philistines were provided with plenty of weapons. What therefore could not be accomplished by an army without weapons, was wrought by the heroism of a single man, whose efforts were furthered with the Divine assistance. Jonathan and his armour-bearer, stealing away from the army, smote the garrison of the Philistines in Michmash; and the terrified Philistines, suddenly stricken without seeing whence their opponents came, turned their swords against each other, and fought with great fury and determination. The Israelites, seeing this panic in the Philistine camp, rushed to the scene of the fighting, and achieved a great victory, which would have been more complete had not Saul laid a foolish oath on the people, invoking a curse on every one that tasted food until the evening. The people became, in consequence, so very faint that they were not able to pursue their enemies as they would otherwise have done, and in the evening they were so famished with hunger, that they flew upon the spoil, slew oxen, sheep, and calves, on the ground, and ate the flesh with the blood. Jonathan, not knowing that such

a command had been issued, tasted a little honey in the course of the pursuit, for which, according to his father's sentence, he was adjudged to die, but the people rescued him. Saul now proceeded to repress the attacks of the neighbouring tribes, which had increased, owing to the weakness of the nation under the Philistine oppression. He fought against the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, and the kings of Zobah, and his efforts were crowned with uniform success.

**6. Saul's Second Act of Disobedience.**—A distinct command was next given by God to Saul, to utterly exterminate the Amalekites, with their sheep and oxen, camels and asses, on account of their savage attack on the Israelites when they came out of Egypt (see Exodus xvii. 14). Having warned the Kenites, who were a friendly tribe, to depart from among the Amalekites, Saul proceeded to carry out the Divine command; but disobeyed it in two particulars. He spared Agag, the king, alive, and yielded to the wish of the people, that the cattle should be preserved for sacrifice to God. In answer to this excuse, Samuel proclaimed the great truth that to obey is better than sacrifice; and stated that as Saul had rejected the word of the Lord, He had rejected him from being king. As Samuel hastily turned to depart, Saul took hold of his mantle to detain him, and it was rent; a sign which the prophet interpreted as showing that the kingdom was rent from him. Samuel, however, consented to honour him in the sight of the people, by remaining to worship with him, and having called for Agag, the Amalekite king, hewed him in pieces before the Lord. This was the last meeting between the prophet and the king. "Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord repented that He had made Saul king over Israel."

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

1. Of what tribe and family was Saul? What was noticeable about his appearance, and how did Samuel meet with him?
2. What was Saul's first attempt in war? What influence had it in establishing his authority?

3. How was it the Israelites had no weapons in their war with the Philistines? How, under such a disadvantage, did they obtain the victory?

4. What were Saul's two acts of disobedience? What was his punishment?

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE REIGN OF SAUL—(*Continued*).

1. **David anointed to be Future King.**—Saul being now rejected, Samuel was instructed to anoint as his successor one of the sons of Jesse, an inhabitant of Bethlehem. Having proceeded there under pretence of offering sacrifice, Samuel caused the sons of Jesse to pass before him, his human judgment as to the one best fitted for the post being overruled by Divine inspiration. When the first seven of Jesse's sons had passed by, his youngest son David was sent for from the sheep-folds, and the Lord said unto Samuel, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." Shortly afterwards, Saul being afflicted by an evil spirit from the Lord, which plunged him in a distressing fit of melancholy, David was recommended for his skilful playing on the harp, as a suitable attendant to soothe and cheer him.

2. **David's Battle with Goliath.**—The war with the Philistines having broken out again, Saul appears to have recovered from his disorder, and David consequently returned to his home. On being sent to the Israelitic army with provisions for his brothers, he saw a gigantic champion issue from the Philistine camp, defying any soldier in Saul's army to fight with him, and offering to decide the fate of the war by this one contest. This giant, who was named Goliath of Gath, was nearly 8 feet high, and was clad in complete armour from head to foot. Finding no other person willing to accept the challenge of so terrible a foe, and thus avenge the insult that had been offered to God, David undertook to meet him,

Refusing Saul's heavy and cumbrous armour, he took with him only his staff, sling, and shepherd's bag, in which latter he placed five smooth stones. Having announced to the giant that he undertook the contest in the name of the God of Israel, whom he had defied, he slung a stone, and threw it with all his might at his advancing enemy. The stone struck the Philistine in the forehead, so that he fell down dead, and David, with the giant's own sword, cut off his head. The Philistines, seeing their champion defeated, fled in dismay and confusion, and the Israelites chased them to the gates of Ekron. Jonathan, the son of Saul, was so struck with admiration at this heroic deed, that he became from this time David's attached and faithful friend. Saul insisted that henceforth David should remain constantly with him, but his jealous spirit was enraged at the song of victory which the women chanted, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." "And Saul eyed David from that day, and forward."

3. **David persecuted by Saul.**—The war with the Philistines having now ceased for a time, Saul became more than ever subject to his fits of melancholy, in which one feeling gradually took possession of his soul, hatred and jealousy of David. Twice, as David was playing on the harp, Saul threw at him his javelin, or long spear, and it was with difficulty he escaped being struck by it. He was, however, in consequence of his great achievement, advanced to high dignity in the kingdom, and made captain over a thousand men. Saul delayed for some time fulfilling the promise he had made, to give his daughter in marriage to the conqueror of Goliath, and imposed a new condition that he should first kill a hundred Philistines, hoping that in the course of this enterprise he would himself be killed. David, however, slew two hundred Philistines, and the king had no longer any excuse for withholding from him his promised reward. David therefore married Michal, and became the king's son-in-law. In all these circumstances, the sacred historian strongly eulogizes the prudence of David's conduct.

**4. David's Flight.**—For a short period, by the intercession of Jonathan, David was restored to Saul's favour, but a new war breaking out with the Philistines, and the enemy being defeated by David's valour, the jealousy of Saul revived, and he again attempted to strike David with his javelin. On his flight to his own house, Saul sent messengers to slay him, but with the assistance of his wife, he made his escape secretly, and fled to Samuel at Naioth in Ramah. Saul, hearing of this, sent messengers to take him, but as they approached Samuel's dwelling, they were seized with the prophetic spirit, which acted with a higher force upon them than the will of the king. His messengers failing to execute his purpose, Saul himself came to Naioth to arrest David, but on arriving at the place, the spirit of prophecy overpowered him also, a circumstance which gave rise to a popular saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Shortly afterwards, David found means to communicate with Jonathan, and having learned that the mind of Saul was set bitterly against him, and that Jonathan in trying to defend him, had been himself struck at, found himself under the necessity of making a flight for his life. Before the two friends parted, however, they made a solemn covenant together of mutual fidelity, which was to extend to their children.

**5. David, calling at Nob, flees to Gath.**—The first place at which David made a pause in his flight was Nob, a priestly city, in which, at the present time, the tabernacle was stationed, and where, consequently, the High Priest dwelt. Pretending to be sent on a secret errand by king Saul, David demanded provisions for himself and his followers, and as Ahimelech had no common bread, he gave them the shew-bread, which was hallowed from being placed on the table of shew-bread in the Holy Place. This circumstance is quoted by our Lord to show that, in cases of necessity, ordinary laws may be put aside. David also obtained the sword of Goliath, which had been laid up in the tabernacle as a trophy of victory. Thus assisted, he left the Israelite

territory, and fled to the court of Achish, king of Gath, but being there recognised as the national hero of Israel, he was obliged to feign madness, and was dismissed without hurt. [www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn)

**6. The Priests at Nob slain.**—The succour which Ahimelech had afforded David, was observed by Doeg an Edomite, chief of Saul's herdsmen, who informed the king of what had taken place. Saul was so enraged that he commanded all the priests of Nob to be put to death, and his own guard refusing to obey his order, they were slain by Doeg, who also put the whole population of the city to the sword. One of Ahimelech's sons, however, named Abiathar, contrived to escape, and from that time he attached himself to the cause of David.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

1. What was the origin of the jealousy of Saul towards David?
2. What aid did Ahimelech afford David on his flight from Saul, and what vengeance did Saul take for this succour?
3. What conclusion does our Lord draw in the gospels from the fact that the High Priest gave David hallowed bread?
4. How did David escape from the hands of Achish, king of Gath, when he was recognised at his court?

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE REIGN OF SAUL—(*Concluded*).

**1. David becomes the captain of 400 Men.**—Having escaped from the hands of the king of Gath, David proceeded to the Cave of Adullam, where he became the captain of a band of 400 men. Every one that was in distress, or in debt, or discontented, ranged themselves under his standard. To provide for the safety of his parents, he placed them under the protection of the king of Moab, for Jesse, through his grandmother Ruth, was related to that tribe. Leaving Adullam, David next

went to the forest of Hareth, from whence he proceeded to relieve the men of Keilah from an attack of the Philistines. Hearing from God, through Abiathar the priest, that the inhabitants of Keilah intended to give him up to Saul, David left that place, and departed into the wilderness of Ziph, where he was visited by his friend Jonathan. At this last meeting, David and Jonathan renewed the covenant they had formerly made, and Jonathan comforted his friend, and assured him he would safely escape from all his difficulties. The Ziphites having informed Saul that his enemy abode among them, David fled to the wilderness of Maon, and here he was in extreme peril, for he was running down one side of a mountain while Saul and his men were ascending the other. Saul was, however, suddenly called away by an invasion of the Philistines, and thus David was left, for a short time, in peace.

**2. David at Engedi: Death of Samuel.**—Saul, having returned from following the Philistines, heard that David had departed to the wilderness of Engedi. There he pursued after him, and entered into a cave, in the sides of which David and his men lay hidden. David's followers now urged him to take this opportunity of slaying Saul, but he nobly refused to stretch forth his hand against the Lord's Anointed. He, however, cut off secretly the skirt of Saul's robe, and when the king had left the cave, called after him, and told him that his life had been in his power, but he had refused to hurt him. Saul was melted to tears at this token of the generosity of his rival, and acknowledged that David was more righteous than himself, and that he should be hereafter the king of the nation. He therefore made David swear that when he came to the throne, he would not slay the members of his family. About this time, Samuel, the aged prophet, died, and was buried at Ramah, amidst the lamentations of the people.

**3. David provoked by Nabal.**—David now took up his abode in the wilderness of Paran, near which dwelt a rich man named Nabal, who possessed 3000 sheep and



1000 goats. At the time of sheep-shearing, David sent ten of his men to Nabal to request, or rather demand, a present, as a reward for not robbing his flocks, or ill-treating his shepherds. Nabal answered the messengers roughly and discourteously, remarking, "There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master," and refused to give him anything. In great anger David was proceeding to avenge this insult, but he was appeased by Abigail, Nabal's wife, who came out to meet him, apologizing for her husband's rudeness, and bringing him a handsome present. She did not tell her husband of the danger he had incurred till the next morning, when he was so struck with dismay and terror that ten days afterwards he died. David then took Abigail to be his own wife, and also Ahinoam of Jezreel; as Saul had taken from him his daughter Michal, and given her to another man.

**4. Saul's Last Expedition in Search of David.**—The people of Ziph, who seem to have been bitter enemies of David, next brought tidings to Saul, that he was hidden in the hill of Hachilah, near Jeshimon. Saul, therefore, at the head of 3000 chosen men, went out to take him. At night, when Saul was asleep in his entrenchment, David and Abishai stole secretly to the place where he lay, and took away his spear, and the cruse of water from his side, as a sign that they might have killed him, if they had sought his life. On this occasion also, Saul acknowledged that he had done wrong in pursuing after David, and promised that he would not do him any further harm.

**5. David flees to Achish, king of Gath.**—David now despaired of his life, if he remained any longer in the land of Israel, seeing that Saul, in spite of occasional outbursts of a better feeling, was set so bitterly against him. He therefore departed with his 600 men into the land of the Philistines, and placed his services at the disposal of Achish, king of Gath. In answer to his request, Achish assigned him the town of Ziklag for his residence, and from this centre he made a number of expeditions against the Amalekites and other tribes

of southern Palestine, persuading Achish that it was against Saul and Israel that his arms were turned. From this time, Saul molested him no further, as he was so completely out of his reach. The Philistines gathering together their forces for a fresh invasion of Israel, David offered his contingent to swell the number of the army, but though Achish was willing to accept his help, the other Philistine lords refused to avail themselves of the aid of so doubtful a friend. While he was absent from Ziklag on this business, his enemies, the Amalekites, spoiled the town, and burned it, carrying away captive the women that were left at home. On his return, David pursued after them, smote them with a great slaughter, and recovered the women and the spoil. Part of the booty he distributed amongst his own followers, and part among the cities of Judah, which had been friendly to him in his wanderings.

**6. Battle of Gilboa: Death of Saul and Jonathan.**—Saul was now in a state of deep depression of spirit. The Philistines had invaded the country with a numerous army, Samuel was no longer alive to counsel him, and the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. In this dilemma he sought the assistance of a celebrated witch who resided at Endor. At first she was afraid of his coming, as in other days he had endeavoured to root out persons practising such wicked arts from the land. At his request, she caused Samuel to appear before him, to whom the unhappy king recounted the wretchedness of his condition. The prophet, disturbed from his repose, could afford him no comfort, but told him that on the next day he and his sons would be with him in the company of the dead. Saul was so struck with despair at such a prospect, that he lay all the length of his great stature along the ground, and it was with difficulty that the woman, who now regarded him with pity, could persuade him to rise and eat. In the action that followed, the battle went sore against Saul, and, being wounded by the archers, he ordered his armour-bearer to slay him. He, fearing to

execute such a command, refused; the king then fell upon his own sword, and died, and his armour-bearer, unwilling to survive him, died with him. The three sons of Saul, including the noble Jonathan, were also slain on this fatal field. The Philistines, having stripped the body of the king of his armour, sent it with the head as a victorious trophy into their cities, and fastened the remaining part of the corpse to the walls of Bethshan. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, grateful for the deliverance Saul had wrought for them in the early part of his reign, went by night, and took the body down, and gave it honourable burial. An Amalekite brought a false version of the tidings to David, carrying with him the crown of Saul, and stating that he had slain him at his own request. David ordered the immediate execution of the messenger, who, by his own testimony, had been guilty of slaying the king, and burst into a strain of passionate lamentation over the fallen monarch and his heroic son.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

1. Where did David place his parents for safety, when he became the captain of a band of men? Why did he place them there?
2. How was David's anger appeased when Nabal refused him a present? What became afterwards of Nabal and Abigail?
3. What town did Achish, king of Gath, give David for him and his followers to reside in? How did he deceive Achish as to the people he attacked?
4. How, after the battle of Gilboa, did the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead show their gratitude to Saul for his saving them from the cruelty of the Ammonite king?

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#### CHAPTER IV.

THE REIGN OF DAVID—B.C. 1056-1015.

1. David made King by the tribe of Judah.—After the battle of Gilboa, David, by Divine direction, returned to his own country, and was made king by the tribe of

Judah at Hebron. The first act of his reign was to thank the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead for their daring act in removing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the walls of Bethshan. Abner, commander-in-chief to the late king, made Ishbosheth, Saul's only surviving son, king of the remaining tribes, but as the Philistines were masters of western Palestine, his capital was fixed at Mahanaim on the east of Jordan. The period of time during which David was king of one tribe only was seven years and six months. There was constant war between the rival kings, during which the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, while the house of David became stronger and stronger. At a skirmish by the pool of Gibeon, the forces of Abner were driven back, and as the defeated general was pursued by the swift-footed Asahel, Joab's brother, he was compelled to pause in his flight, and slay him in self-defence. Soon afterwards, a quarrel broke out between Ishbosheth and Abner, because the latter had presumed to take to himself one of the concubines of King Saul. Abner was so angry at Ishbosheth's expostulation, that he proceeded at once to make advances to David, with the view of making him king of the whole of the tribes. Abner came to Hebron to see David on this errand, and was feasted hospitably, and dismissed in peace. Soon afterwards, Joab returning from the day's warfare, heard of Abner's visit, and having overtaken him in his journey home, treacherously stabbed him to death, because he had slain his brother. The deep lamentation which David made for the fallen general, convinced the Israelites that this dark deed was not done with his sanction. A short time after, two of the captains of Ishbosheth, breaking in upon the king at noonday as he lay upon his bed, slew him, and took his head to David at Hebron, expecting to be richly rewarded. For thus slaying a righteous person, however, on his own bed, David decreed that they should themselves be punished with death.

**2. David made King of the whole Land.**—After the death of Ishbosheth, all the elders of Israel came up to

David at Hebron, and made him king. His first warlike achievement as king of the whole nation was the taking of Jerusalem from the Jebusites. As Joab was the first to scale the rocky cliff, and smite a Jebusite, he was confirmed in his position as captain of the host. David built himself a palace in his new capital, the materials for which were furnished by Hiram, king of Tyre. Another Philistine invasion shortly afterwards taking place, David drove them back with great loss, burning the images they had left behind. He now turned his attention to the ark of God, which he brought up from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem with great rejoicings. On its way there, a man named Uzzah, seeing it shake in the cart, put forth his hand to steady it, on which, as a punishment, he was immediately struck dead. The ark was therefore put down for a time in the house of Obed-Edom, a Gittite, where it remained three months. From thence it was taken in great pomp to Jerusalem, David dancing before it, girded with a linen ephod. David next announced to the prophet Nathan his desire to build an house for God in Jerusalem; but the prophet, in God's name, forbade him, because in the course of his lifetime he had shed so much human blood. A son, he said, should be born to him who should be a man of peace, and it should be his privilege to build the house of God. David, however, during the whole of his reign, was occupied in storing up materials for this great work.

**3. David's Conquests.**—The time was now come for the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, that his seed should possess a tract of country bounded on the south by the river of Egypt, and on the north-east by the river Euphrates. He first of all subdued the Philistines and the Moabites, placing the latter under tribute. He next turned his arms against the kings of Zobah in the north-east, "to recover his border at the river Euphrates." These he subdued in spite of the assistance rendered them by their brethren, the Syrians of Damascus. He also made himself master of the Edomites, and placed garrisons throughout their territory. Nahash, the king

of the Ammonites, having died, David sent ambassadors to Hanun, his son, the new king, to comfort him in his bereavement. But acting under the advice of his counsellors, Hanun treated them with gross indignity, and sent them back to their lord. The two nations now assembled their forces for battle, and though the Ammonites were assisted by the Syrians of the north-east, they were utterly defeated by Joab and Abishai. The routed Syrians, venturing on a fresh trial of their strength, received a more signal repulse at the hands of David, after which they consented to become his servants.

**4. David's Sin with Bathsheba.**—Though the Ammonites had been defeated, their territory was not yet subdued, nor their capital city, Rabbah, taken. While Joab and the Israelite army were besieging this fortress, David remained in his palace at Jerusalem. At this time he committed a crime that has left a dark stain on his memory, and which was the immediate cause of the family troubles which afflicted him during the remaining part of his reign. From the roof of his palace, observing a woman of very great beauty, he found upon inquiry that she was the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, one of his mighty men, then absent with Joab at the siege of Rabbah. Yielding to temptation, David sent for her, and committed adultery with her, and finding no means to conceal his guilt, he sent a letter to Joab directing him to place Uriah in the hottest part of the fight, so that he might be slain. After this, David took Bathsheba into his own house, and she became his wife. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, who sent Nathan the prophet to him, with a parable of an ewe lamb wrongfully taken from a poor man, to satisfy a rich man's desires. David readily saw the blackness of his guilt, as depicted in this manner, and when he indignantly declared that the rich oppressor deserved to die, Nathan met him with the emphatic answer: "Thou art the man." As a punishment for his crime in shedding the innocent blood of Uriah, it was announced that the sword should make sad havoc in his own family, a prophecy that

received a mournful fulfilment in the deaths of Amnon and Absalom. David repented of his sin with deep sincerity, as is seen in the 51st Psalm, written on this occasion, and the prophet declared to him, in God's name, that he was forgiven. But the child which Bathsheba bore from this union was stricken with a mortal illness, and died in seven days from its birth. She, however, in the next year gave birth to a son, who was named Solomon (the peaceful), and who, on the death of David, succeeded him as king. While these things were going on, Joab had been busily occupied in the siege of Rabbah, which was shortly afterwards taken, and the whole country thoroughly subdued.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

1. How long was David king of the tribe of Judah only? Who reigned during this period over the other tribes, and where was his capital?
2. Give particulars concerning the deaths of (1), Asahel, (2), Abner, and (3), Ishbosheth.
3. By what means did Joab retain his position as commander-in-chief in the extended kingdom?
4. Why was Uzzah smitten with death during the removal of the ark to Jerusalem?
5. Give a list of the nations subdued by the Israelites in the reign of David.
6. By what means did Nathan bring home to David the greatness of his sin in committing adultery with Bathsheba?

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#### CHAPTER V.

##### THE REIGN OF DAVID—(Continued).

1. **Dissensions in David's Family.**—It is written in the Book of the Law, that in the time of the monarchy, the king must not "multiply wives to himself" (Deut. xvii. 17), and it was the breaking of this injunction that caused so much dissension in David's family. His sons, born of different mothers, had little sympathy with each

other, and thus were ready at the slightest provocation to engage in hostile acts. Amnon, having committed an outrage on his sister Tamar, was two years afterwards slain by his brother Absalom, who, to avoid his father's displeasure, fled to the court of Talmi, king of Geshur, where he remained three years. Joab, at the end of that time, found means to induce David to allow of his son's return; but still he refused to see him for two years more. Then, a reconciliation having taken place, Absalom began to abuse his father's goodness by stealing away the hearts of his subjects from him. Under the pretence of fulfilling a vow he had made some years past, this wicked son obtained permission to depart to Hebron, where he unfurled his standard as a rebel against his father's kingdom. He was joined by 200 men out of Jerusalem, but his chief strength lay in the counsel of Ahithophel, who as the grandfather of Bathsheba, was doubtless incensed with David for the crime he had committed with her.

2. Absalom's Rebellion defeated.—What was most to be feared in this crisis, was a sudden attack by Absalom on Jerusalem, which David would not be able successfully to withstand. He therefore fled from his capital city, weeping as he went, leaving Hushai, the Archite, and Zadok and Abiathar the priests, to observe the course of events, and send him word. As he came to Bahurim, he was cursed by a member of the house of Saul, named Shimei, and the distressed monarch forbade any to hurt him, saying if his own son was seeking his life, how much greater reason had this adherent of a fallen dynasty. Absalom, having triumphantly entered Jerusalem, called a council to decide his future action, and the advice of Ahithophel was, that he should fall upon his father before he had obtained time to rally his forces, and thus be able to achieve an easy victory. Hushai, who had been left behind by David to oppose the counsel of Ahithophel, advised, on the contrary, that they should not stake all the success of the enterprise on a hasty action, but should assemble a vast army, which not all the valour of David's men should be able to disperse. Absalom and



his council decided to accept the advice of Hushai, and Ahithophel, foreseeing the defeat of the rebellion, went home, set his house in order, and hanged himself. Having heard from his secret friends the movements of the rebel forces, David made haste and crossed over the Jordan, and came to Mahanaim, whither he was pursued by Absalom. At the request of his men, David did not take part in the battle which followed, in which the rebel army was completely routed, and its leader Absalom, caught by his long hair in the boughs of a great oak-tree, slain by the hand of Joab. David was greatly affected at hearing of the death of his son, exclaiming, "O my son Absalom, my son; my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" The Israelites now seeing that Absalom was dead, remembered the great services rendered formerly by David, and invited him to return to his capital, though this proceeding caused a fierce tribal jealousy to spring forth—the men of Israel complaining of their brethren of Judah being the first to call back the king. Shimei, seeking forgiveness for his wicked conduct, was pardoned by David, who seemed anxious to heal up the breach by measures of mercy and conciliation. But Sheba, a Benjamite, raising a second time the standard of rebellion, was pursued by Joab, and put to death. David, angry with Joab for having slain his favourite son Absalom, promoted Amasa, the former chief of Absalom's army, to the position of captain of the host; but Joab, meeting him by the great stone of Gibeon, treacherously stabbed him, so that he died.

**3. David numbers the People—The Three Day's Pestilence.**—A famine desolating the country year by year, David was informed that it was sent as a punishment for Saul's breach of the covenant with the Gibeonites, and consequently seven sons of the late king were put to death. The king, from motives of pride and vanity, having in spite of the remonstrance of Joab, insisted on numbering the people, a choice of three evils was given him for a punishment. Choosing rather to fall into the hands of a

merciful God, than into the power of unmerciful men, David elected to suffer by a three days' pestilence, which destroyed of the people 70,000 men. The destroying angel was about to desolate the city of Jerusalem, but his hand was stayed at the prayer of the king at the threshing-floor of a rich Jebusite, named Araunah. The census taken showed that there were 800,000 men of war in Israel, and 500,000 in Judah.

4. **Usurpation of Adonijah.**—As David was now a very old man, one of his sons, named Adonijah, the brother of Absalom, tried to seize the kingdom. He gained over to his purpose Joab and Abiathar the priest, and was making a great feast in the southern part of Jerusalem, when the festivities were interrupted by sounds of rejoicing, and tidings were brought him that, by the command of David, Solomon had been anointed king. Adonijah, in great terror, took hold of the horns of the altar, but Solomon declared that if he showed himself a worthy man he should not be hurt. Soon afterwards David died, having completed a reign of forty years, seven years as king of Judah, and thirty-three years as king of Judah and Israel.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V.

1. Show how the dissensions in David's family may be traced to a disregard of the law of Moses?
2. How do you account for the hostility displayed by Ahithophel to David by joining in Absalom's rebellion?
3. Whose counsel did Absalom follow in preference to that of Ahithophel? What did Ahithophel then do?
4. Who was Amasa? How did he meet with his death?
5. What number of fighting men in Israel and Judah did the census taken by David show? What punishment was inflicted for this act?
6. Who assisted Adonijah in his attempted usurpation of the kingdom in the latter days of King David?

## CHAPTER VI.

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON.—B.C. 1015-975.

1. **Conspiracy of Adonijah.**—Solomon was hardly seated on the throne, when he saw from the request of Adonijah to be permitted to marry Abishag, the concubine of the late king, that a conspiracy was forming. He therefore acted with decision and promptness. He not only caused Adonijah to be executed, but by his orders, Joab, his confederate, was slain, though he clung to the altar for protection, and Abiathar was degraded from the priesthood. Shimei was ordered not to depart from Jerusalem, and as, in pursuit of his runaway servants, he broke this command, he was put to death by the hand of Benaiah. The great offices of the state were now filled by the following individuals: Nathan was prophet, Zadok, priest, and Benaiah, commander-in-chief.

2. **Solomon's Sacrifice, Vision, and Judgment.**—At the beginning of his reign, Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Proceeding to Gibeon, where the ancient tabernacle was stationed, he offered a thousand burnt-offerings, and in a vision from God by night, in which he was told to ask a gift, he wisely made choice of wisdom and knowledge. This new gift was made clearly manifest in his celebrated judgment between two mothers, disputing about the parentage of a child. Not being able to discover the truth from their conflicting statements, he determined to find out the true mother from the love she was sure to bear for her offspring. He therefore decreed that the child should be cut in two, a counsel to which the false mother consented, but the real parent implored rather that it should be given to her enemy. The report of this judgment made the wisdom of Solomon resound throughout the land. He was wise, large-hearted, and exceedingly learned; he spoke 3000 proverbs, and composed 1000 songs; he discoursed of trees, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; also of beasts, fowls, creeping things, and fishes.

**3. Solomon builds a House for God.**—In this great undertaking, Solomon made use of the stores laid up by his father, David, and obtained a vast quantity of fresh materials from Hiram, king of Tyre. The wood used for this purpose was cut down in the cedar forests of Lebanon, and in the raising of the structure, the stone was ready prepared before it was brought there, “so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.” The heaviest part of the work was performed by the conquered races, whom David had reduced into servitude; but besides these, there were in employment 30,000 Israelites, working 10,000 at a time, month by month. The temple was built in that part of Jerusalem called Mount Moriah, being the place, where, at David’s intercession, the pestilence was stayed in the judgment that was sent for his numbering the people. Its dimensions were exactly double those of the ancient tabernacle, as it was 80 cubits long, 40 cubits wide, and 20 cubits high. It was furnished with great splendour and magnificence, the large amount of gold and silver which it contained, offering a strong temptation to neighbouring kings, in later history, for the attack of the capital. The building of the temple occupied seven years and a half, and when it was completed, Solomon, by a solemn service and sacrifices, dedicated it to God. In his prayer on this occasion, Solomon acknowledged the omnipresence of the Deity, saying, “behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, much less this house which I have builded.” He also touchingly referred to the captivity, shadowed forth in the book of the law (Leviticus xxvi.), and prayed that if such a calamity desolated the land, the people, on their true repentance, might be restored and forgiven. At the end of Solomon’s prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices, and the glory of Jehovah filled the temple. In a vision which Solomon afterwards had, God promised to be merciful to His people, but threatened severe punishments if they forsook His commandments.

**4. Solomon's Architecture and Commerce.**—Besides building a house for God, Solomon adorned the capital with other structures of great magnificence, the chief of which were the palace of Pharaoh's daughter, and the house of the forest of Lebanon. He also formed reservoirs, to furnish the city with a plentiful supply of water. He fortified several towns, including Tadmor, Megiddo, Hazor, Gezer, and Beth-horon, besides repairing the walls of Jerusalem, and building in it a fort called Millo. He was also great in commerce, trading with Egypt for horses, chariots, and linen-yarn, and with Ophir (probably in Arabia) for gold. He had a navy at Ezion-Geber, on the shores of the Red Sea, by which he was enabled to carry on commerce with Ophir; and the navy of Hiram, king of Tyre, brought him from Tarshish (probably a Spanish port) gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. His fame amid the surrounding nations was so great, that it induced the Queen of Sheba to leave her own country and visit Judæa, and so astonished was she at his wisdom, knowledge, and magnificence, that, though upon starting she disbelieved the report she had heard, she afterwards confessed that the half was not told her.

**5. Solomon's Idolatry and Disregard of the Law.**—Meanwhile, amid all his splendour and magnificence, Solomon was being led away from God to idol-worship by his many strange wives. The particular forms of idolatry to which he became attached, were Ashtoreth, Moloch, and Chemosh, the gods of the Zidonians, Ammonites, and Moabites. He also broke the Mosaic law in three distinct points:—(1), He multiplied to himself wives, having 700 wives, and 300 concubines (Deut. xvii. 17); (2), he commenced a trade with Egypt (Deut. xvii. 16); and (3), he also added to his army a large number of horses and chariots (Deut. xvii. 16). For these various sins, especially the idol-worship which he established, God's judgments were denounced against him, and it was declared that after his death part of the kingdom would be rent from him, and given to his servant. God also stirred up against him enemies in his lifetime, the chief

of whom were Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (afterwards king), Hadad, a prince of Edom, and Rezon, a Syrian of Damascus. He died at Jerusalem after a reign of 40 years.

### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

1. What persons were concerned in the conspiracy of Adonijah? How were they variously punished?
2. What incident caused Solomon's reputation for wisdom to spread throughout the land?
3. Give particulars of Solomon's attainments in knowledge.
4. In what part of Jerusalem was Solomon's temple built? Compare its dimensions with those of the tabernacle. How long did it take in building?
5. With what countries did Solomon trade; and what articles of commerce did he obtain from each?
6. To what various forms of idolatry did Solomon become attached; and in what points did he break the law of Moses?

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## CHAPTER VII.

THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH FROM THE ACCESSION OF REHOBOAM TO THE DEATH OF AHAZIAH.  
—B.C. 975-884.

1. **Rehoboam Reigned 17 Years (contemporary King of Israel: Jeroboam).**—The people being gathered together at Shechem to make Rehoboam king, seized the opportunity to demand a relief from the burdens imposed upon them by King Solomon. Taking the advice of his young counsellors in preference to that of the old men who stood before his father, Rehoboam gave them a rough answer, declaring, "my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." This answer was the signal for a revolt of the ten tribes, and Jeroboam, who had been summoned from Egypt, headed the movement. Having sent Adoram to levy the tribute, the people indignantly stoned him to death, upon which Rehoboam, in great fear, fled to Jerusalem. Jeroboam

then became king of Israel, while Rehoboam reigned over Judah and Benjamin. The first act of the new king was to raise an army of 180,000 men to recover the territory he had lost, but the prophet Shemaiah, in the name of the Lord, forbade him to prosecute his design. His kingdom was strengthened by the large number of priests and Levites, which, owing to the calf-worship of Jeroboam, left the northern kingdom. Falling into idolatrous practices, after the example of his father, he was punished in the fifth year of his reign by an invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt, who stripped the temple of its treasures and departed, leaving the Judean king in a state of vassalage.



BETHEL.

**2. Abijam Reigned 3 Years (contemporary King of Israel: Jeroboam).—**Abijam, coming to the throne on the death of Rehoboam, made great preparations for

war with Israel, and in a great battle fought at Mount Ephraim, utterly defeated the forces of Jeroboam, and took several frontier towns, viz., Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephraim. He still, however, followed the idolatrous practices of his father, and died after a short reign of three years.

**3. Asa Reigned 41 Years (contemporary Kings of Israel: Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab).**—Asa, the son of Abijam, was a good king, and swept away the idolatrous practices, which had been encouraged in the three previous reigns. He even went so far as to remove Maachah from her post of dignity and influence as queen-mother, because she persisted in worshipping idols. Asa, who was her grandson, destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kedron. He next fortified the cities of Judah, and raised so powerful an army, that by God's assistance he was enabled to defeat Zerah the Ethiopian, who had invaded his kingdom with a formidable army. Baasha, king of Israel, angry that through the reformation of the king of Judah so many of his subjects were drawn up to Jerusalem, made war against Asa, who bribed, with the temple treasures, Benhadad, king of Syria, to make war against his rival, and thus relieve him from the attack, a course of policy for which he was severely rebuked by Hanani, the prophet. Towards the end of his reign, he suffered very much from gout in his feet, and after a prosperous reign of 41 years, he died, and was succeeded by Jehoshaphat, his son.

**4. Jehoshaphat Reigned 25 Years (contemporary Kings of Israel: Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram).**—Jehoshaphat, who ascended the throne of Judah at the age of 35 years, was a good king, and throughout his whole reign was a zealous maintainer of the law of Moses, and a constant opponent of idolatrous practices. The great mistake of his life was his marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, a step which produced unhappy results in the succeeding reigns. He formed an alliance with Ahab in an attempt to



recover the town of Ramoth Gilead from the Syrians, but Ahab being slain in the battle, Jehoshaphat returned in peace to Jerusalem. Jehu, the prophet, rebuked him for the assistance he had rendered to so wicked a king, and he then gave instructions to the judges, priests, and Levites, to be zealous and diligent in the performance of their various duties. Being attacked by a strong force of Moabites and Ammonites, on his supplication to God, he was delivered out of their hands. He was afterwards engaged with Jehoram, king of Israel, in a war against Moab, in which the Moabites were defeated. Having, like Solomon, built a navy at Ezion Geber, to trade with Tarshish, the ships were, according to the prophecy of Eliezer, wrecked before leaving the port.

**5. Jehoram Reigned 4 Years (contemporary King of Israel: Jehoram).**—Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, reigned four years during his father's lifetime, which altogether gives him a reign of eight years. The first act of his reign was the slaughter of his six brothers; and as he had married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, he was persuaded by her to introduce the worship of Baal into his kingdom. In the midst of his evil courses, he received a writing from the prophet Elijah, denouncing God's judgment against him, and predicting the manner of his death. During his reign the Edomites revolted, and though he defeated them in battle, he was not able to reduce them again into subjection. The Philistines and Arabians invaded his kingdom, and made captives of his wives and sons, so that only the youngest was left him. He died of an incurable disease which afflicted him two years, "and his people made no burning for him like the burning of his fathers."

**6. Ahaziah Reigned 1 Year (contemporary King of Israel: Jehoram).**—Ahaziah was twenty-two years old at his accession, and during his brief reign allied himself with his uncle Jehoram, king of Israel, in the war against Syria, at Ramoth Gilead. The Syrians having defeated the forces of the allied kings, and severely wounded Jehoram, king of Israel, they returned to their kingdoms.

While Ahaziah was on a visit to his uncle, the Israelite king, at Jezreel, that monarch was slain by the hands of Jehu, one of his captains, and Ahaziah being shortly afterwards captured was also put to death. Thus at one point of time, the thrones of Israel and Judah were alike vacant. Jehu ascended the former, while Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, occupied for some years the latter.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

1. What prophet commanded Rehoboam to cease his preparations to make war against the ten tribes?
2. What Egyptian monarch invaded Judea during this reign? What plunder did he carry off?
3. How did Asa obtain the withdrawal of Baasha's army, which had invaded his kingdom? What prophet rebuked him for the policy he adopted?
4. What alliance did Jehoshaphat make with a wicked king of Israel? Show how it caused the destruction of both the kings of Israel and Judah at the same period.

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### CHAPTER VIII.

THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL FROM THE  
ACCESSION OF JEROBOAM I. TO THE DEATH OF AHAB.  
—B.C. 975-897.

1. **Jeroboam Reigned 22 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa).**—Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was the first king of Israel, as distinct from Judah. In the Bible narrative, his name is generally mentioned with the opprobrious epithet attached to it, "who made Israel to sin." The establishment of his dynasty was promised him if he would continue faithful to God, but fearing lest the observance of the Mosaic law would make the people anxious to return to their allegiance to the house of David, he set up golden calves at Bethel and Dan, proclaiming, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

These calves were probably intended as symbols of Jehovah, but the worship of them was a distinct breach of the second commandment. The calf-worship of Jeroboam must, however, not be confounded with the Baal-worship introduced by Ahab, which was a much grosser form of idolatry. As Jeroboam stood by his altar at Bethel, burning incense, a prophet from Judea proclaimed its future destruction by a pious king that should arise from the house of David, named Josiah. As the prophet was returning to his own country, contrary to the orders given him, he went back to eat and drink, and was therefore slain by a lion. Soon afterwards, Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, falling sick, he instructed his wife to disguise herself, and proceed to the residence of Ahijah the prophet, to inquire if he would recover. Ahijah, who was blind on account of his great age, was informed as to the rank of his visitor, and while denouncing God's judgment against Jeroboam for his idolatrous practices, told her that as soon as she entered the city from whence she came, the child would die.

**2. Nadab Reigned 1 Year (contemporary King of Judah: Asa).**—Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, began to reign over Israel in the second year of the reign of Asa, king of Judah. He supported the calf-worship which his father had set up. After a reign of nearly two years, he was slain, together with the whole house of Jeroboam, by Baasha, his captain of the host, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah referred to in the preceding paragraph.

**3. Baasha Reigned 24 Years (contemporary King of Judah: Asa).**—The one feature of the reign of Baasha was the constant state of warfare he carried on with Judah. In this war, Baasha was the aggressor, angry that so many of his subjects were drawn to Jerusalem to attend the religious services. Asa, having bribed Benhadad, king of Syria, to attack Israel, and thus relieve his own dominions, Baasha was compelled to withdraw his army from Judea to protect his northern frontier. During Baasha's reign, he established his capital at Tirzah. God sent him a message by Jehu,

the prophet, towards the close of his reign, stating that as he had followed the evil example of Jeroboam, he should likewise share his punishment, and his dynasty be rooted out.

**4. Elah Reigned 1 Year (contemporary King of Judah: Asa).**—The reign of Elah, the son of Baasha, occupied parts of two years. While in a state of drunkenness, he was slain at Tirzah, by Zimri, one of his captains, who also destroyed his whole family.

**5. Zimri Reigned 7 Days (contemporary King of Judah: Asa).**—When the usurpation of Zimri was made known, the Israelite army engaged against the Philistines made Omri, their captain, king, who besieged Zimri in Tirzah, the capital. Zimri, seeing that the city was taken, in a state of desperation, set fire to his palace, and perished in its flames.

**6. Omri Reigned 12 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Asa and Jehoshaphat).**—The first six years of Omri's reign were taken up with a civil war with Tibni, in which Omri was victorious. When he had obtained undisputed possession of the throne, he left Tirzah, the former capital, and built Samaria (so called from Shemer the former owner of the site), which from this time became the residence of the Israelite kings. He followed in the evil courses of the preceding monarchs, and after a reign of eleven years, died, and was succeeded by his son, Ahab.

**7. Ahab Reigned 22 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Asa and Jehoshaphat).**—In the beginning of his reign, Ahab, "as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam," took for his wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Zidon, at whose instigation he introduced the worship of Baal into Israel, building an altar for the false god in Samaria, his capital. At this period, the great prophet Elijah appears suddenly on the scene, warning the king that for several years (three years and six months, James v. 17) there should be neither dew nor rain. During the famine, the prophet dwelt at first by the brook Cherith, fed by ravens, who brought him bread and flesh every morning and evening.

The brook drying up, he was commanded to go to Zarephath, to the house of a poor widow, whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil he caused, by a miracle, not to waste or fail. Her son afterwards falling sick and dying, Elijah raised him again to life. The end of the famine drawing nigh, Elijah met Ahab as he was searching the land for water, and in answer to his question, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" replied that it was the king himself, by the Baal-worship he had introduced, that had brought such affliction on the land. He commanded the king to attend at a solemn controversy between the two religions, to be held on Mt. Carmel, at which it was decided by the unanimous voice of the people, "Jehovah He is the God; Jehovah He is the God." The prophets of Baal were then put to death by Elijah's orders, and afterwards Ahab was warned to prepare his chariot, and return to Jezreel, for the long delayed rain was about to deluge the earth.

Elijah was now compelled to flee, for Jezebel threatened that she would take his life because he had slain her prophets. Having arrived in the wilderness of Beersheba, he was seized with a fit of deep despondency, praying that his life might be taken from him. In this state he fell asleep, and was awoke by an angel touching him, pointing to a miraculous meal that had been prepared for him, in the strength of which he remained on Mount Horeb forty days and forty nights. Having been directed to stand on the mountain before the Lord, Jehovah passed by him, not in the strong wind, or the earthquake, or the fire, but in a still small voice, asking him "What doest thou here, Elijah?" In answer to his complaint that his efforts for his country had been fruitless, he was told that there remained yet 7000 in Israel that had not bowed the knee to Baal. He was instructed to anoint two kings and one prophet; Jehu to be the destroyer of Ahab's idolatrous house, Hazael to be king over Syria, and Elisha to be prophet in his stead. Shortly afterwards, finding Elisha ploughing in the field, he cast his mantle upon him, by which symbolic act he called him to the prophetic office,

The kingdom of Israel was now attacked by Benhadad II., king of Syria, who with thirty-two dependent kings laid siege to Samaria, but was repulsed with great slaughter. The next year, renewing the attack, his servants advised him to fight on the plain, as the gods of the Israelites were gods of the hills. They were, however, this time defeated, and Benhadad, their king, taken prisoner; but Ahab, in a moment of weakness, agreed to spare his life, on his consenting to make a treaty with him, a proceeding for which he was rebuked by a prophet.

Though Samaria had been built, and established as the capital, by Omri, his father, the favourite residence of Ahab was at Jezreel. Near to his palace, in that city, was the vineyard of Naboth, and the king desiring it for a garden of herbs, offered to buy it of him, but the Israelite refused to sell the inheritance of his fathers. Foiled in this object, Ahab became low-spirited and sad, and Jezebel, his wife, inquiring the cause, sent letters to the elders of Jezreel, acting on the instructions of which they murdered Naboth, under a thinly-disguised form of justice. As the king was taking possession of the vineyard of the murdered man, the stern prophet Elijah met him, denouncing God's judgments against him and his wicked wife with terrible plainness and particularity. "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine," and "the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the walls of Jezreel." Ahab humbled himself before God on hearing this dreadful sentence, for which it was announced that the part of the punishment relating to the extermination of his family should be delayed until the reign of his son.

For three years there had been a cessation of hostilities between Syria and Israel, but now Ahab persuaded Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in an attempt to wrest Ramoth Gilead from the power of the Syrian king. Micaiah, the true prophet of God, foretold a disastrous ending to this enterprise, but his voice was overborne by the 400 other prophets of Israel, who said that God would deliver the Syrians into their hands.

At the commencement of the battle, the Syrian monarch instructed his captains to aim only at the destruction of Ahab, and fearing some such design, the king of Israel put on a disguise. But one of the Syrian archers drawing a bow at a venture, smote Ahab between the joints of his armour, so that he cried to be taken out of the engagement. He was stayed up in his chariot till the evening, when he died; and the chariot being washed in the pool of Samaria, the dogs licked up his blood, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Elijah.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

1. What was the great sin of Jeroboam? By whose hands was his dynasty destroyed?
2. Who was the King of Israel that built Samaria? Why was it so called?
3. What Israelite monarch introduced into the country the worship of Baal?
4. What punishment was inflicted upon Ahab for the murder of Naboth? What prophet announced it to him before it took place?

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#### CHAPTER IX.

THE REIGNS OF AHAZIAH AND JEHORAM OF ISRAEL.—  
B.C. 897-884.

1. **Ahaziah reigns 1 Year (contemporary King of Judah: Jehoshaphat).**—Ahaziah had a very short reign, for, falling through a lattice in his upper chamber, he became so dangerously ill that he died soon afterwards. While he was in this critical condition, he sent messengers to Baalzebub (lord of the fly), the god of Ekron, to inquire if he should recover. Elijah, meeting the messengers, ordered them to return, demanding whether it was that there was no God in Israel that Ahaziah had sent to Ekron, and informing him that he should not rise up from his bed of sickness, but should surely die. In great anger, the king sent three several companies of 50 men

each, to arrest the prophet, the two first of whom perished by fire at Elijah's call. The lives of the third company were saved at the prayer of the captain, but the same stern message was repeated, and shortly afterwards Ahaziah died, leaving the kingdom to Jehoram his brother.

**2. Elijah taken up to Heaven without Dying.**—The time had now arrived when Elijah was to be taken by a whirlwind into heaven. Starting from Gilgal on a journey to Bethel, he requested Elisha to remain in that city, but he refused to leave him. At Bethel and Jericho the prophetic schools assured Elisha that his master was about to be taken from him, and in answer to their observations, he remarked that he was aware of his coming bereavement. Having arrived at the Jordan, Elijah smote the waters with his mantle, so that they divided hither and thither, leaving space for the two to cross over on dry ground. Before his translation, Elijah told his successor to ask what he should do for him before he was taken up, and Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit. Elijah replied that he had asked a hard thing, but if he was able to see him when he ascended, it should be granted to him. This condition was fulfilled when the translation took place, for Elisha cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." So in a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven.

**3. Return of Elisha.**—Taking up the mantle which fell from Elijah before he ascended into heaven, Elisha returned to western Palestine. When he came to the Jordan, he smote its waters with the mantle of the great prophet, exclaiming, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" The sons of the prophets, when they saw him, confessed that the spirit of Elijah rested upon him. They implored his permission to send a company of 50 men to search for the absent prophet, but it was without result. Remaining some little time at the prophetic school in Jericho, he healed the unwholesome waters of the city, putting in them some salt. As he was approaching Bethel, some children from that city mocked him, saying,



"Go up, thou bald head! go up, thou bald head!" The prophet turned and cursed them in the name of the Lord, and two she bears came out of the wood, and tare forty-two of them. So hateful is it in the eyes of God for the young to rail at the infirmities of the aged: so determined was He to shield His prophet from conduct so harsh and brutal.

**4. Elisha's Miracles.**—(1.) The kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom, joined together in a war against the Moabites, who had refused to give Jehoram the customary tribute. The three armies were in great danger from perishing for want of water, but Elisha caused an abundance of water suddenly to appear, which the Moabites, from the sun shining upon it, mistook for blood, and supposing their enemies had slain each other, rushed to spoil their encampment, but were met, and defeated. (2.) A prophet having died and left his wife in debt, his creditor came and demanded her two sons to be sold to pay it. She had no goods left but a pot of oil, and that Elisha caused to be so multiplied, that, when it was sold, it was sufficient to pay the debt, and yield her something to live upon. (3.) At Shunem, near Mount Carmel, a wealthy woman hospitably entertained Elisha, when passing through her city. Having obtained a son through the prayer of the prophet, when he was old enough to accompany his father to the corn-field, he was smitten by a sunstroke, and died soon afterwards. Elisha, having been sent for in haste, prayed that he might be restored to life, and the dead child was given back alive to his mother. (4.) At Gilgal, in a season of scarcity, Elisha directed the sons of the prophets to prepare for dinner some herbs that had been gathered. Finding afterwards that a poisonous plant had accidentally been placed among them, the prophet, by casting meal into the pot, destroyed the deadly properties of the pottage, and rendered it wholesome. (5.) A man having brought Elisha twenty loaves of bread, as the first-fruits of his harvest, they were so multiplied by the prophet, as to become more than sufficient for a hundred men to feed upon. (6.) Naaman, the commander-in-chief of the army of the King of Syria,

being a leper, heard from a little girl, whom he had taken captive out of the land of Israel, that were he to go to the prophet Elisha, he would be healed of his loathsome disorder. Having proceeded to Elisha's residence,



MOUNT CARMEL.

and, according to his directions, washed himself in the Jordan seven times, Naaman was cleansed from his leprosy. But Gehazi, Elisha's servant, coveting the gold of the wealthy Syrian, which his master had refused to touch, went after him, and by a false statement obtained a considerable treasure, for which guilty conduct he was punished, by having to endure with Naaman's gold, Naaman's leprosy. (7.) The sons of the prophets being engaged in building themselves a larger dwelling by the river Jordan, one of them, in cutting down a tree, let the iron head of the axe fall into the water. He told Elisha of the misfortune he had met with, which was the greater as the axe had been borrowed. The prophet, by casting a stick into the water, caused the iron to swim, and so it was easily recovered.

**5. Jehoram Reigned 12 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah).—**Jehoram was not so bad a king as his father Ahab, for he put away the image of Baal, though he still upheld the calf-worship of Jeroboam. The great feature of his reign was the war with Syria, in which, for the most part, the king had the assistance of the prophet Elisha, who communicated to him the secret designs of the Syrian monarch. Benhadad, hearing who it was that told his enemy the words that he spoke in his bedchamber, sent a great host to Dothan, where the prophet dwelt, to take him. His servant was in great distress at seeing the horses and chariots of the Syrian army; but, at the prayer of Elisha, his eyes were opened, and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire protecting his master. Elisha prayed that his enemies might be smitten with blindness, and in this condition he led them into Samaria; but instead of killing them, they were fed and sent back again to their king. The result of this generosity is given in the short verse that follows: "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

A short time after, however, Benhadad, king of Syria, again invaded Israel, and besieged Samaria for three years. During this time a dreadful famine desolated the city, which was so grievous that a woman actually boiled and ate her own child. Attributing this visitation to the prophet Elisha, Jehoram sent an executioner to slay him; but the man was not permitted to enter the house, and the prophet assuaged the king's anger by announcing the speedy termination of the siege. The Syrian army had been smitten with a panic in the night, and had fled away, leaving the city in peace.

Elisha now went to Damascus, the Syrian capital, and while there, Benhadad, the king, who had fallen sick, sent Hazael, his general, to inquire of him if he should recover. The prophet, seeing the Syrian general, wept to think of the calamities his country would afterwards suffer at his hands, and told him that he should be hereafter king over Syria. Taking back to Benhadad part of

Elisha's answer concerning his sickness, the next day he suffocated the king with a wet cloth, and ascended himself the vacant throne. Jehoram, in alliance with Ahaziah, made now another attempt to recover Ramoth Gilead from the Syrians, but he was wounded in battle, and returned to Jezreel for his wounds to be healed, where his nephew the King of Judah continued to remain with him. While the two kings remained in Jezreel, Jehu was anointed by one of the prophets, king of Israel, and Jehoram proceeding to meet him, as he was driving furiously towards the city, he slew him with a bow drawn by his full strength, and shortly afterwards caused Jezebel and the whole family of Ahab to be destroyed. In this revolution, Ahaziah the king of Judah was not spared, and thus the thrones of both kingdoms were vacant at the same time.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX.

1. State the occasion on which Elijah called down fire from heaven on his enemies.
2. What did Elijah give to Elisha on his translation to heaven?
3. Give a list of the miracles of Elisha.
4. "Because Ahab humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house." Give the name of Ahab's son here referred to.
5. By whose hands was the dynasty of Ahab rooted out of Israel?

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#### CHAPTER X.

HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH FROM THE DEATH OF AHAZIAH TO THE DEATH OF HEZEKIAH—B.C. 884-698.

1. **Athaliah Reigned 6 Years (contemporary King of Israel: Jehu).**—When Athaliah, mother of Ahaziah, heard that her son had been slain by Jehu, she destroyed the whole royal family of Judah except one child named Joash, whom his aunt Jehosheba, wife of the high priest Jehoida, saved. Having hid him successfully six years, at

the end of that time he was presented to the people as the rightful monarch of Judah. Athaliah, hearing the joyful shouts of the people when he was proclaimed king, shouted, "Treason! Treason!" but she was arrested and slain.

**2. Joash Reigned 40 Years (contemporary Kings of Israel: Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Joash).**—Joash reigned wisely during the lifetime of the high priest Jehoida, making several useful reforms, and repairing the temple, which had fallen into a state of decay. After the death of Jehoida, Joash was induced by the leading men of the kingdom to restore idolatry, for which he was boldly rebuked by Zechariah, Jehoida's son. Inflamed with rage against him, they stoned him to death in the court of the temple, crying with his last breath, "The Lord look upon it, and require it." This incident is referred to by our Lord, in St. Matthew xxiii. 35, as an instance of the hostility ever borne by the Jewish nation towards their prophets.\* The punishment for this wicked act was not long delayed, for Hazael, king of Syria, came up against Judah with a small army, defeated the forces of Joash, took away to Damascus great spoil, and destroyed the princes of the people. The Syrians having left him, suffering at this time from "great diseases," his servants formed a conspiracy against him, and slew him on his bed, and he was succeeded by his son, Amaziah.

**3. Amaziah Reigned 29 Years (contemporary Kings of Israel: Joash and Jeroboam II.)**—The first act of Amaziah's reign was to punish the murderers of his father, and in this he showed an admirable clemency by sparing their innocent children. In order to strengthen his kingdom, he made war on the Edomites, whom he defeated. But on his successful return from this expedition, he raised God's anger against him, by setting up the gods of the Edomites to be worshipped in Jerusalem. He next proceeded to send a foolish message of defiance to Joash, king of Israel, to which that monarch wittily

\* He is stated in St. Matthew to have been "the son of Barachias," but this is probably the insertion of a copyist, who confounded him with the prophet Zechariah (Zechariah i. 1).

replied in a contemptuous parable. "The thistle," he said, "that was in Lebanon, sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give thy daughter to my son to wife, and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle.'" In the war that followed, Amaziah was defeated and taken captive by Joash, who, when he had plundered the temple, returned to his capital, leaving the humbled monarch to continue his reign. Amaziah reigned fifteen years after this reverse, and a conspiracy being formed against him in Jerusalem, he fled to Lachish, where his enemies pursued him and slew him in the twenty-ninth year of his reign.

**4. Uzziah Reigned 52 Years (contemporary King of Israel: Jeroboam).**—Uzziah was raised to the throne, on the murder of his father, at the early age of sixteen years, and reigned for more than half a century. He was a good and wise king, and the nation advanced to a height of greatness under his rule, that it had not attained since the death of Solomon. He sought after God under the guidance of the prophet Zechariah, and was successful in several warlike expeditions, the chief of which were against the Philistines and Arabians. The great fault of his reign was his mad attempt to enter the temple to burn incense, in which he was opposed by the high priest, Azariah. Persisting in his design, he was struck with leprosy, and remained a leper until the day of his death. During his reign, a great earthquake occurred, which, though not mentioned in the historical books, is referred to in the writings of the prophets (Amos i. 1; Zechariah xiv. 5).

**5. Jotham Reigned 16 Years (contemporary King of Israel: Pekah).**—Jotham was the actual ruler of the country during the leprosy of his father, Uzziah. He was a good king, and his reign was prosperous. He waged a successful war with the Ammonites, who afterwards agreed to pay him a large annual tribute. In spite of his piety and goodness, it is remarked that "the people did yet corruptly."

**6. Ahaz Reigned 16 Years (contemporary Kings**

**of Israel: Pekah and Hoshea).**—Ahaz was a wicked, idolatrous king, who sunk so low into heathen practices, as to make his children pass through the fire to Moloch. Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, having invaded Judah, and besieged Jerusalem, Ahaz appealed to Tiglath-peleser, king of Assyria, for aid against his enemies, paying him for his services by the gold and silver of the temple. The Assyrian monarch attended to the request of Ahaz, and marching against Damascus, took that city, and slew Rezin its king. Ahaz, having proceeded to Damascus to meet Tiglath-peleser, saw there an idolatrous altar, a pattern of which he sent to Urijah, the priest, instructing him to build one similar to it in Jerusalem. On his return, Ahaz offered burnt-offerings on this altar.

**7. Hezekiah Reigned 29 Years (contemporary King of Israel: Hoshea).**—Hezekiah was one of the most perfect and upright of the kings of Judah. He not only cleansed his kingdom from the gross idolatries his father had introduced, but he removed the high places which had been tolerated by some kings not altogether unfaithful to Jehovah, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent which Moses made in the wilderness, finding it had become an object of worship. As a rebuke to those who had burnt incense to it, he called it "Nehushtan," i.e., "a piece of brass." He purged and repaired the temple, and offered a series of solemn sacrifices as an atonement for the past sins of the people. He also directed that the feast of the Passover should be kept with unusual splendour, and it was observed during the long period of fourteen days. Thus, this godly king made a thorough reformation of religion in Judah, destroying all that savoured of idolatry, and restoring the pure worship of Jehovah.

He was successful in his warlike enterprises, and defeated the Philistines, chasing them into Gaza, one of their strongholds. He refused to pay the annual tribute, which Ahaz had promised to Assyria. In the fourth year of his reign, Shalmanezar, king of Assyria, carried the inhabitants of Israel into captivity, but did

not molest the kingdom of Judah. In the fourteenth year of his reign, Sennacherib, another of the Assyrian monarchs, invaded Judah, took the fenced cities, and had advanced as far as Lachish, when Hezekiah induced him to retire, by promising to pay him a large quantity of silver and gold, which he procured from the temple. About this time, Hezekiah was struck with a mortal sickness, but, at his earnest supplication, Isaiah was directed to lay a plaster of figs on the boil from which he was suffering, which effected his recovery. Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon, having sent ambassadors to Hezekiah congratulating him on his recovery, in a moment of weakness he showed them all his treasures, but Isaiah humbled his pride by announcing to him that, in a day not far distant, all the riches of his kingdom should be transported to Babylon. A few years later, the Assyrian monarch invaded Judah for the second time, and from Lachish, sent his generals with a vast army to invest Jerusalem. The insulting letter of Rabshakeh, Hezekiah spread before the Lord, and, in answer to his prayer, the angel of the Lord, probably by pestilence, destroyed 185,000 men in the Assyrian army. Sennacherib, therefore, departed to Nineveh, his capital, where he was shortly afterwards murdered by his two sons. Hezekiah only lived about a year after this deliverance. He died in the twenty-ninth year of his reign, and was succeeded by his son, Manasseh.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER X.

1. Who were the parents of Athaliah? How did she meet with her death?
2. "From the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias whom ye slew between the temple and the altar!" What Zacharias was this, and why was he slain?
3. State the parable in which Joash, king of Israel, replied to the challenge of Amaziah, king of Judah.
4. What was the great blot of the reign of Uzziah? What punishment did he receive for his fault?
5. "He called it Nehushtan." What does the word Nehushtan mean, and to what did Hezekiah give this name?
6. How was Hezekiah saved from the invasion of Sennacherib?



## CHAPTER XI.

THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL FROM THE  
ACCESSION OF JEHU TO THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL  
—B.C. 884-721.

1. **Jehu Reigned 28 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Athaliah and Joash).**—Having destroyed the dynasty of Ahab, Jehu next set himself to root out the worship of Baal from Israel. Assisted by Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, he called together a great assembly to sacrifice to Baal, proclaiming that "Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu shall serve him much." When all the prophets, priests, and worshippers of Baal were gathered into one building, and care had been taken to exclude those who were faithful to Jehovah, Jehu gave orders to his captains to put them all to death. They then brought forth the images out of the house of Baal and burned them, and brake in pieces the great image of the god itself, and finally destroyed the temple in which it was worshipped. "Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel." He did not, however, return to the pure worship of Jehovah, but upheld the calf-worship instituted by Jeroboam. During his reign, the tribes which dwelt beyond the Jordan suffered much from the attacks of Hazael, king of Syria.

2. **Jehoahaz Reigned 17 Years (contemporary King of Judah: Joash).**—Jehoahaz the son of Jehu was harassed by the attacks of the Syrians during his whole reign. He followed the evil policy of Jeroboam in supporting the worship of the golden calves, but in his deep distress from the ravages of the Syrians, he sought God, who raised up for the nation a deliverer.

3. **Joash Reigned 16 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Joash and Amaziah).**—Joash, too, continued the calf-worship of Jeroboam, but his reign was more prosperous than that of his father. Elisha, having fallen sick of the illness of which he died, Joash visited him, weeping

at the thought of the great loss his death would be to the country. The dying prophet directed the king to smite on the ground, and he smote three times and then stayed. Elisha was angry with him for not having smitten five or six times, and told him that now he should only have three victories over the Syrians. Elisha then died, and a dead man being placed in his grave a short time afterwards, his corpse coming into contact with the bones of the prophet, revived, and the man was restored to life. In accordance with the prophecy of Elisha, Joash defeated the Syrians in three battles, and recovered the cities they had taken in the reign of his father. Being challenged to battle by Amaziah, king of Judah, he met that monarch at Bethshemesh, routed his army, took him captive, and plundered his capital.

**4. Jeroboam II. Reigned 41 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Amaziah and Uzziah).**—Jeroboam II. was the most prosperous of the kings of the northern kingdom. Like his predecessors in the dynasty of Jehu, he upheld the calf-worship of Jeroboam. His conquests were so extensive that they included the distant city of Damascus, the capital of the Syrian kingdom. He restored the coast of Israel from Hamath in northern Syria to the Dead Sea. The prophets Jonah, Hosea, and Amos, lived in this reign, and in their writings throw much light on the internal condition of the people.

**5. Zachariah Reigned 6 Months (contemporary King of Judah: Uzziah).**—On the death of Jeroboam II. there was an interregnum of eleven years, at the end of which time Zachariah his son became king, and reigned for the short period of six months. He was the last king of the Jehu dynasty, and was slain by Shallum who succeeded him.

**6. Shallum Reigned 1 Month (contemporary King of Judah: Uzziah).**—Shallum, after reigning for a month, was slain by Menahem at Samaria.

**7. Menahem Reigned 10 Years (contemporary King of Judah: Uzziah).**—During the reign of Menahem, he perpetrated great cruelties on the inhabitants of such

towns as would not acknowledge his authority. He upheld the worship of the calves instituted by Jeroboam. Pul, the king of Assyria, having invaded Israel, Menahem persuaded him to withdraw by a present of a thousand talents of silver.

**8. Pekahiah Reigned 2 Years (contemporary King of Judah: Uzziah).**—Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, reigned for the short period of two years, and was then slain by Pekah his captain.

**9. Pekah Reigned 20 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz).**—Pekah joined with Rezin, king of Syria, in an attack upon Judah, which was not attended with any great success. Shortly afterwards his own dominions were invaded by Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and the inhabitants of Gilead and Galilee taken captive. Hoshea, the son of Elah, formed a conspiracy against Pekah, slew him, and reigned in his stead.

**10. Hoshea Reigned 9 Years (contemporary Kings of Judah: Ahaz and Hezekiah).**—There was an interregnum of about eight years between the death of Pekah and the accession of Hoshea. It is said of Hoshea, that "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him." Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, attacked his kingdom, and reduced him into a state of vassalage. On his design to shake off the Assyrian yoke with the aid of So, king of Egypt, becoming known to Shalmaneser, that monarch seized upon the person of his rebellious vassal, and shut him up in prison. He then besieged Samaria for three years, at the end of which time he took it, and carried the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel into captivity. He colonized the land thus left bare and desolate, by people from Babylon, Cuthah, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, who, being harassed in their new territory by lions, petitioned that they might be taught the religion of the God of the country. One of the captive priests was therefore sent back to teach the people the will of the God of Israel; but as they also practised the worst vices of the idolatries in

which they had been brought up, there ensued from this a mixture of religions.

### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI.

1. What Israelite king introduced the worship of Baal into the country? By whom was it rooted out?
2. State the miracle that occurred when a corpse was buried in the sepulchre of Elisha.
3. How many kings of Israel belonged to the dynasty of Jehu? What form of idolatry was tolerated in their reigns?
4. What is said in the Bible as to the character of Hoshea?

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## CHAPTER XII.

THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH FROM THE  
ACCESSION OF MANASSEH TO THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.  
—B.C. 698-588.

### 1. Manasseh Reigned 55 Years (Israel in Captivity).

—Manasseh ascended the throne of Judah at the early age of twelve years, and at once changed the whole policy of his father's government in religious matters. He built the high places which Hezekiah had destroyed; erected altars for Baal; worshipped the host of heaven; made his son to pass through the fire to Moloch; and established idolatrous altars in the temple itself. In his reign, according to tradition, the prophet Isaiah suffered death by being sawn asunder. Such wickedness brought on Manasseh prompt and terrible punishment. The king of Assyria invaded his kingdom, took him captive, bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. Here, in his deep affliction, he returned to his God, who, in answer to his prayers, restored him to his kingdom, after which he reigned much better than before.

### 2. Amon Reigned 2 Years (Israel in Captivity).—

After a short and evil reign of two years, in which he followed Manasseh's example in worshipping idols, without imitating him in his repentance, Amon fell by a

conspiracy of his servants, and the throne passed to Josiah, his son.

**3. Josiah Reigned 31 Years (Israel in Captivity).—**Josiah began his reign at the early age of eight years, and was a most excellent king. In the twelfth year of his reign, he purged Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, groves, carved images, molten images, altars of Baal, and whatever had been polluted by idolatrous worship. According to the prophecy of the disobedient prophet (1 Kings xiii. 2), he destroyed the altar which Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had set up in Bethel, and burnt on it the bones of the bodies of the priests who had ministered before it. Turning from their sepulchres to another with an inscription on it, he found it was that of the disobedient prophet, who 300 years before had prophesied this occurrence, upon which he said, "Let him alone, let no man move his bones." He also restored the temple, and Hilkiah, the priest, accidentally finding in it a copy of the law, caused it to be read before the king, who on hearing it, rent his clothes, because its provisions had been so completely neglected and disobeyed. In the eighteenth year of his reign, he kept a solemn passover, which exceeded, in its splendour any previous celebration of that feast since the time of Samuel. But not all the virtues of this pious king could avert the approaching fall of his kingdom, for the inhabitants were unfaithful to God, and lived wicked and corrupt lives. Accordingly, the prophetess Huldah was instructed to declare that a great punishment was impending over the land for the crimes of its people, but that Josiah's piety should be rewarded by the evil not occurring in his own days. Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, passing through the dominions of Josiah, to attack the king of Assyria, Josiah persisted in withstanding his progress. A battle took place at Megiddo, in which the pious king was slain, and his servants took him and buried him with great honours in Jerusalem.

**4. Jehohaz Reigned 3 Months (Israel in Captivity).—**After a short reign of three months, Jehohaz was

deposed by Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, and removed to Egypt, where he died. Pharaoh-necho then made his brother, Eliakim, king, who received the new name of Jehoiakim.

**5. Jehoiakim Reigned 11 Years (Israel in Captivity).**

—Jehoiakim during his reign followed evil courses. After Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had defeated Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, he came up against the kingdom of Judah, took Jehoiakim prisoner, and bound him in fetters to carry him to Babylon. He appears afterwards to have accepted his submission, and allowed him to retain his throne, but he carried the vessels of the temple to Babylon, and seized as hostages certain royal and noble youths. Three years afterwards, Jehoiakim threw off the Babylonian yoke, but though Nebuchadnezzar was not able at that time to punish him, his kingdom was ravaged by bands of Chaldees, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites. We learn from the prophecy of Jeremiah that Jehoiakim met his death by violence, and was "buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah xxii. 19).

**6. Jehoiachin Reigned 3 Months (Israel in Captivity).**

—After a short and evil reign of 3 months, Jehoiachin was attacked by Nebuchadnezzar, who carried him captive to Babylon, with his whole family except his uncle Zedekiah, and all the treasures of his palace and of the house of God. In this captivity was included "the princes, the mighty men of valour, the craftsmen, and smiths, even ten thousand captives, none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land." Jehoiachin continued a prisoner at Babylon 36 years, till the death of Nebuchadnezzar, when his successor, Evil-merodach, released him from confinement, treated him kindly, and made him eat at his own table (2 Kings xxv. 27). He died at Babylon. He was also known as Coniah and Jeconiah.

**7. Zedekiah Reigned 11 Years (Israel in Captivity).**

—Zedekiah was the son of Josiah, and therefore uncle to

the last king. During his reign, a strong party in the kingdom advocated an alliance with Egypt, which was discouraged by Jeremiah the prophet. In the ninth year of his reign, the last siege of Jerusalem was formed by Nebuchadnezzar, who took it, after a resistance of sixteen months, slew the sons of Zedekiah before his face, and having put out his own eyes, carried him captive to Babylon, where he died. Nebuchadnezzar then stripped the temple of its remaining treasures and burned it to the ground; burned also the houses of the great and wealthy; brake down the walls of Jerusalem; slew the nobles at Riblah; and took the remaining inhabitants into captivity, leaving only a few poor people as vine-dressers and husbandmen. Thus the kingdom of Judah came to an end after it had existed for a period of about 500 years, or dating from the accession of Rehoboam, 380 years.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XII.

1. What incident in Manasseh's life caused him to return to God and forsake idolatry?
2. How did Josiah fulfil the prophecy of the man of God who came from Judah in the reign of the first Jeroboam?
3. In what manner did Josiah meet his death?
4. In whose reign did the first captivity of Judah take place?
5. Give the name of the last king of Judah. State the cruel treatment he received from Nebuchadnezzar.

## PART V.

**From the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Birth of Christ.  
A Period of 588 Years.**

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

**1. Condition of the Jews in Babylon.**—The Jews in their captivity at Babylon, instead of becoming mingled among the conquering race, preserved their nationality by their tenacious adherence to their religion. Their lot, though hard and bitter, from forced work in agriculture and building, was not without certain alleviations. They were allowed to build houses, plant gardens, and possess personal property. The captivity extended, according to prophecy, for seventy years (Jeremiah xxv. 12), but this period has to be reckoned from the first deportation in the reign of Jehoiakim, B.C. 605.

**2. Daniel and his three Companions.**—It was in the first of the Jewish captivities that Daniel and his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were carried away to Babylon. There they received new names, by which the three latter are more commonly known. Daniel was called Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; and Azariah, Abednego. These youths belonged to the royal family of Judah. Choice food from the king's table was appointed for their nourishment, but they refused to taste it, and satisfied the officer that was set over them, that they would appear fairer and fatter without it.

**3. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Golden Image.**—The king of Babylon having dreamt a dream that troubled his spirit, which he, upon waking, had forgotten, commanded



his magicians, under threat of terrible punishment, to make known both the dream and the interpretation. The wise men failing to state the nature of the dream, a decree was issued that they should be slain; but Daniel, hearing of it, obtained a little extra time, during which he narrated to the king his dream, and made known to him the interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar was so gratified with this evidence of Daniel's inspiration, that he made him ruler over the province of Babylon, and at his request also exalted his three companions. Nebuchadnezzar next made a golden image of immense height, which he placed in the plain of Dura, and commanded all his ministers and chief officers to attend at the dedication, and fall down and worship it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refusing thus to commit idolatry, were cast into a burning fiery furnace, but received no hurt, neither had the smell of fire passed on them. The astonished king was greatly disturbed to find the three captives walking in the midst of the fire, guarded by a protector, whom he supposed could be none other than the Son of God. He therefore made a decree that the God of Israel should be everywhere spoken of with reverence, "because," he said, "there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

**4. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Fall.**—Nebuchadnezzar afterwards had another dream, referring to a great humiliation which was about to fall upon him, and this dream none of the wise men, except Daniel, could interpret. In accordance with its provisions, as he was exulting in the thought of the greatness of his power, saying, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built," he was smitten by a strange disorder, which made him suppose himself a beast, and mingle with the oxen in the fields and eat grass as one of them. When he had recovered from this form of insanity, he was restored to his kingdom, and acknowledged the goodness and power of the one supreme God.

**5. Belshazzar's Feast, and Fall of Babylon.**—Nebuchadnezzar died in B.C. 561, and the Bible mentions none of his successors till we come to Belshazzar, who made a

great feast to his princes and nobles, in which he defiled the sacred vessels taken from the temple at Jerusalem. In the midst of the revels, the fingers of a man's hand were seen writing on the wall in mysterious characters, which were interpreted by Daniel to mean : **Mene**, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it;" **Tekel**, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting;" **Peres**, "Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." In that same night, Cyrus, king of Persia, having diverted the waters of the Euphrates from their usual course, entered Babylon by the empty bed of the river, took it, and slew its king.

6. **Daniel in the Den of Lions.**—Cyrus being now supreme ruler of a vast empire, entrusted the government of Babylon to Darius the Mede, who set over his province 120 princes, and over them 3 presidents, of which Daniel was the first. The other ministers, envying the high position of the Hebrew captive, tried to bring some charge against him, so that he might be degraded; but they could not find any occasion for fault in him, except as concerning his religion. They, therefore, persuaded Darius to sign a decree forbidding any person for thirty days to ask a petition of God or man. Daniel, from higher motives of obedience to God, disobeyed this decree, and according to his usual custom, prayed to God, looking towards Jerusalem, three times a day. Darius was, therefore, compelled to order him to be cast into a den of lions, for so the decree ran; but in the morning the anxious governor, who had not slept all night, was delighted to find that Daniel's God had shut the lions' mouths, and that he had received no hurt. He then punished those who had conspired together to ruin Daniel, and made a decree that everywhere men should fear and tremble before his God.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

1. From what date are the seventy years of the captivity of Judah to be reckoned?
2. How did Cyrus effect an entrance into Babylon in the reign of Belshazzar?
3. Why was Daniel cast into the den of lions? Give the result of the conspiracy against him.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

1. **The Decree of Cyrus.**—In the year 536 B.C., or seventy years from the first captivity in 606 B.C., Cyrus issued a decree, stating that God had charged him to build Him an house at Jerusalem, and that therefore the Jewish exiles were to return and undertake this important duty. He charged the people among whom they dwelt to help them with silver and gold, and set them an example by restoring the 5400 vessels of the former house, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried to Babylon.

2. **The Captives return under Zerubbabel: Foundation of the Temple Laid.**—Zerubbabel was the leader of the band of Jewish exiles who availed themselves of the permission of Cyrus to return to their native country. The whole number was 42,360 Jews, and 7367 servants. When they had arrived at Jerusalem, they offered a solemn sacrifice to God, and made preparations for the building of the second temple. The high priest at this time was named Jeshua, or Joshua, and next to Zerubbabel he was the most influential person among the returned captives. In the second year of the return the foundation of the sacred building was laid, amidst much rejoicing, which was mingled with the loud weeping of the ancient men, who had seen the glory of the first temple before its destruction. "So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

3. **The Samaritans Hinder the Work.**—The half-heathen colonists whom Shalmaneser had placed in the empty land after the captivity of Israel, watched the proceedings of the returned exiles with keen interest, and offered to assist in the project. Their co-operation was however firmly declined, the Jews answering, "ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God,

but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, hath commanded us." The Samaritans, incensed at this refusal, did all in their power to hinder the work, by representing to Artaxerxes, the monarch then reigning, that the city of Jerusalem had always been rebellious and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that it would be dangerous to the peace of the empire if it were rebuilt. Artaxerxes accordingly ordered that the building of the temple should be suspended until another commandment was given.

**4. Decree of Darius for the Advancement of the Building.**—A new king named Darius having ascended the throne, the Jews sent him a petition setting forth the previous decree of Cyrus in their favour, and requesting his permission to proceed with the building of the temple. Darius, finding from a search in the Persian archives that such a decree had been issued, gave orders that the work should not only be permitted, but actively assisted it. The second temple was therefore completed in the year 516 B.C., and great sacrifices were offered at the dedication, which was followed by a celebration of the Passover.

**5. Esther and Mordecai.**—In the year 486 B.C., Darius died, and was succeeded by his son Xerxes, who is called in the Scriptures Ahasuerus. Leaving for a short time the history of the returned exiles in Jerusalem, we must now narrate a series of events closely affecting the welfare of the Jews, which happened at the Persian court. Ahasuerus being angry with his queen Vashti, for refusing to attend at a feast when she was bidden, determined to depose her from her high position, and select for her successor the most beautiful virgin he could find. At Susa, the Persian capital, were living at this time a Jew named Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin, and his cousin Esther, a maiden fair and beautiful. Esther, being brought with other virgins before King Ahasuerus, was selected by him as his queen; and Mordecai, shortly afterwards revealing to the king the existence of a conspiracy against his throne, a record of his services was entered in the royal chronicles.

**6. Haman's Rise and Fall.**—Ahasuerus now appointed as his prime minister a man named Haman, who was an Agagite, or a descendant of the Amalekite kings. Haman, thus highly exalted, was treated with great reverence by all in the palace except Mordecai, who "bowed not, nor did him reverence." Having found out the nation to which Mordecai belonged, he scorned to single him out for punishment, but in his pride determined to destroy him with the whole nation of the Jews. Accordingly, Haman represented to King Ahasuerus that the Jews were a turbulent people, with laws different to all other nations, and that if he would issue a decree for their destruction, he (Haman) would cause his treasury to be enriched with ten thousand talents of silver, the spoils of the murdered race. The king consented to this proposal, and orders were issued on the thirteenth day of the first month, that the Jews were to be destroyed by the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Mordecai, having read the decree, "rent his clothes, put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and cried with a loud and bitter cry." Having sent tidings of the impending fate of her nation to Esther, the queen, she at the peril of her life went to Ahasuerus, who held out to her his golden sceptre as a sign that her intrusion was pardoned. She then invited the king and Haman to a banquet of wine which was to take place on the following day. That night the king was unable to sleep, and so caused to be read before him the chronicles of his kingdom, in which was recorded the services of Mordecai in revealing the conspiracy against his life. Learning that no reward had been given to Mordecai, Haman was summoned and asked by the king, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" The haughty favourite supposing that person to be himself, advised that he should be clothed in the royal apparel, and conducted on horseback by one of the king's most noble princes through the city. How great then was his rage and confusion on learning that he was to cause Mordecai to be so dressed, and himself to lead him

through the city, and proclaim before him, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour." When the king and his favourite were seated at Esther's banquet, she interceded for her condemned countrymen, and pointed out Haman as the plotter of their ruin. In fierce anger, Ahasuerus arose from the banquet, and hearing that Haman had had a gallows erected in his house on which to hang Mordecai, gave orders that he himself should be executed on it. Mordecai was then made chief minister of the kingdom, and as the former decree for the destruction of the Jews could not be reversed, another order was issued giving them full power to fight in defence of their lives. They therefore seized the opportunity to slay their enemies, the rulers helping them for fear of Mordecai.

### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

1. Who was the leader of the Jewish captives in their return to Jerusalem? Who was the High Priest at the time?
2. State the scene which occurred at the laying of the foundation of the second temple.
3. What people hindered the Jews from building the temple? What Persian monarch forbade the progress of the work; and who issued a decree for its completion?
4. By what name is Ahasuerus known in ancient history?
5. How were the Jews saved from the destruction which was passed upon them in the decree of Ahasuerus?
6. State the punishment of Haman the Agagite.

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## CHAPTER III.

### EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

1. **Ezra Leads a Second Band of Exiles back to Jerusalem.**—We have no records of the proceedings of the Jews from the death of Mordecai to the departure of Ezra at the head of a second band of captives for Jerusalem in B.C. 458. Ezra was a priest who was descended

from Hilkiah, the high priest in the reign of Josiah, and is described as "a ready scribe in the law of Moses." He obtained a commission from Artaxerxes, king of Persia, authorizing him to collect money for the furnishing of the temple, and constituting him governor over the Jews in Judea. His chief efforts were directed to prevent his countrymen intermarrying with heathen nations, and, moved by his exhortations, the people repented, and promised amendment.

**2. Nehemiah Builds the Wall of Jerusalem.**—Nehemiah was cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes. Hearing from Hanani of the afflicted and defenceless condition of the Jews at Jerusalem, he fell into a state of deep despondency. The Persian monarch, noticing his dejected appearance, inquired the cause of it, upon which Nehemiah informed him how the city of his fathers lay waste, and their sepulchres open to every intruder. The king then gave him permission to depart in order to build the wall of Jerusalem. In this work he was opposed by Sanballat and Tobiah, with a band of Arabians, Ammonites, and Philistines; and it became necessary that the builders should use one hand at their work, grasping a weapon of defence with the other. Sanballat now brought a charge against Nehemiah of trying to make himself king, but he gave no heed to his accusations. A false prophet was next hired to terrify Nehemiah, with a prediction that he would be assassinated, but this also failed to move him. With constant exertion, undeterred by threats, menaces, or open hostility, the wall was completed in 52 days.

**3. Ezra Reads the Law to the People.**—The wall of Jerusalem being built, Ezra stood in a pulpit, or tower of wood, and read in the hearing of the people the law of Moses. "They read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." The people wept on hearing its words, but Nehemiah comforted the people, and exhorted them rather to rejoice on such a holy day. They then kept the Feast of Tabernacles in a manner in which it had not been observed since the days of

Joshua. Day by day, from the first of the seven days to the last, Ezra read to the people the book of the law of God. One result of this study was the exclusion of the Moabites and Ammonites from the congregation of God, "because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them."

4. **Nehemiah's Second Mission to Jerusalem.**—Nehemiah, after the completion of the building of the walls of the city, returned to the Persian court, and when he had been there some time, obtained the permission of the king to proceed again to Jerusalem. He was there grieved to find that Eliashib, the high priest, had allowed Tobiah, one of the enemies of Israel, to use the chambers of the temple as store-houses. Having cast out the household stuff of Tobiah, he commanded the chambers to be cleansed, and placed in them their proper furniture. He also enforced a strict observance of the Sabbath, and rebuked the people for marrying heathen wives, deposing for this offence Joiada, the son of Eliashib, the high priest, who had married the daughter of Sanballat.

#### QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

1. Who was Ezra? How is he described in the Bible?
2. Who was Nehemiah? What great work did he accomplish?
3. Who opposed the Jews in building the walls of Jerusalem? How long was this work in operation?
4. What expedient did Nehemiah devise to defend the builders of the wall from hostile attacks?

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### CHAPTER IV.

#### THE CONNECTION BETWEEN OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY.

1. **The Jews under the Persian Empire.**—Little is known of the history of the Jews from the death of



Nehemiah to the overthrow of the Persian empire in B.C. 331. As the monarchy was not revived, the High Priest became the virtual ruler of the country. We learn from tradition that he was assisted in the government of the country by a council of 120 members, called the Great Synagogue. About 367 B.C., we are told by Josephus that the high priest, Jonathan, murdered his brother, Jesus, in the temple, because he was trying to deprive him of his rank and position. In the time of the Persian dominion, the Samaritans erected a rival temple to that of Jerusalem on Mount Gerizim, where a passover was sacrificed and a ritual of the law observed. Even after this temple had fallen, they regarded the mountain with great veneration, contending that it was the place where Abraham was directed to offer Isaac, and where Melchizedek met him after his victory over the four kings. The Jews regarded these Samaritans with feelings of hatred and hostility, denying their claim to be called descendants of Jacob, and contradicting their statements about the historical associations connected with Mount Gerizim. They were, after all, mere strangers from Assyria, and had no part in the inheritance of true Israelites. Still we find them, as in John iv. 12, claiming Jacob as their father, and Mount Gerizim as the place where worship to God was most acceptable. Henceforth the Jews at Jerusalem regarded them with a passionate hatred, preferring rather the inhabitants of Galilee, among whom were some remnants of the ten tribes, who acknowledged the pre-eminence of the Jerusalem temple, to these nearer neighbours, who had set up a rival system, supported by such specious pretences.

**2. The Jews under Alexander the Great.**—Jaddua, the successor of Jonathan, is the last High Priest mentioned in the Old Testament Scriptures (Nehemiah xii. 11, 22). He was most probably High Priest in the reign of the last Persian king, Darius; and Josephus narrates that when Alexander the Great was approaching Jerusalem in B.C. 332, Jaddua went out to meet him, arrayed in his robes of office, with a numerous train, and that the

great conqueror was so moved by the solemn spectacle, that he did reverence to the sacred name of God, and told his attendant that "he had seen the God whom Jaddua had represented, in a dream at Dium, encouraging him to cross over into Asia, and promising him success." Alexander conferred many privileges on the Jews, while he rigorously repressed an insurrection of the Samaritans.

**3. The Jews under the Ptolemies.**—Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., and, leaving no heir, his vast empire was contended for by rival generals. Ptolemy, the son of Sagus, a Macedonian of humble station, having obtained the government of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem on the Sabbath, when the Jews were restrained by thier laws from resisting, and easily took it. Under his regin, and those of his successors, the Jews were widely dispersed through Egypt and Northern Africa. During the first five reigns of the Ptolemies, the Jews were tranquil and prosperous. In the reign of Ptolemy II., Philadelphus, the Old Testament Scriptures were translated into Greek about 280 B.C. This version is known as the Septuagint, from the story that seventy persons were engaged in the translation. Most of the quotations of the Old Testament found in the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and Epistles, are taken from the Septuagint. It is recorded of Ptolemy IV., Philopater, that he, on a visit to Jerusalem, attempted to enter the sanctuary of the temple, but that a sudden attack of paralysis prevented him executing his purpose. He, however, wreaked his vengeance on the Alexandrian Jews, for the disappointment he had experienced.

**4. The Jews under Antiochus III. and IV.**—In 198 B.C., Antiochus III., king of Syria, commonly called Antiochus the Great, won a decisive victory near the Jordan sources, over Ptolemy V., which made him master of Palestine. His position, in this respect, was acknowledged by the Romans in a treaty they made with him in B.C. 188. In the reign of Antiochus IV., an organised attempt was made to force the Jews to abandon their laws, and conform to Grecian usages.

The temple at Jerusalem was polluted, and "they set up the abomination of desolation on the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judah on every side, and burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets." They tore in pieces the books of the law which they found, burnt them with fire, and made it an offence punishable with death for any one to secrete them. They placed an idol altar over the altar of God, and offered sacrifices upon it. The chief test of conformity to Grecian customs, was presenting swine's flesh for the Jews to eat, "wherefore they chose rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy Covenant; so then they died."

5. **The Maccabees.**—In this crisis, God raised up for the persecuted people, a family of deliverers, known as the Maccabees. A man named Mattathias, of the tribe of Levi, had a family of several sons, one of whom, named Judas, had for a surname the title Maccabeus, a word probably meaning "a hammer." Mattathias raised the standard of independence amongst his countrymen, but being already an old man, died in 166 B.C., naming his son Judas as his successor. By his heroic actions, Judas defeated in many engagements the generals of Antiochus, and was finally enabled to gain possession of Jerusalem, when he purified the temple from the pollutions which defiled it. On the death of Antiochus IV., Demetrius obtained possession of the Syrian throne, but his general, Nicanor, was defeated by Judas at Adasa, near Beth-horon, B.C. 161. But shortly afterwards, this heroic leader, whose force was weakened by dissensions among his followers, was slain in an engagement at Eleasa, and his forces dispersed. On the death of Judas, the Jews experienced terrible sufferings, and again rose in insurrection against their rulers, under the command of Jonathan, youngest son of Mattathias. After two or three campaigns, the Syrian general, Bacchides, came to terms with Jonathan, and he judged the people in peace at Michmash for some time, till he was treacherously slain, B.C. 144.

The government now passed into the hands of Simon, the last remaining of the sons of Mattathias, under whose rule the independence of Judea was formally acknowledged. After governing the people with great wisdom and prudence for nine years, he too was murdered by his son-in-law, Ptolemy. But his second son, John Hyrcanus, succeeded to his position, and assumed the title of "Prince of Israel." Though at first compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of Antiochus Sidetes, on the death of that monarch he threw off the yoke of Syria, and by an alliance with Rome was strengthened in his government. He conquered the enemies of his country in Samaria and Idumea, and destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim. He died a natural death, B.C. 106.

**6. The Asmonean Dynasty.**—Aristobulus I., the eldest son of John Hyrcanus, assumed the title of king, and, in a short reign of a single year, conquered Iturea, and executed his brother, Antigonus, on a suspicion of treason. Alexander Jannæus, his brother, was a bloodthirsty man, who, in a reign of 37 years (B.C. 105-78), perpetrated many dreadful acts of cruelty. In the disputes as to the succession of the throne after his death, an Idumean, named Antipater, obtained great influence, taking the side of one brother against the other. The Romans were now extending their conquests in this direction, and in the year B.C. 44, Antipater was appointed by them procurator of Judea, and by an alliance of his son, Herod, with Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Aristobulus, he became the representative of several branches of the Asmonean dynasty.

**7. Herod the Great made King of Judea.**—In B.C. 37, Herod the Great was appointed by the Roman senate king of Judea. In the year 9 B.C., he built at Jerusalem a new temple which was that in which our Saviour taught. He also adorned Jerusalem with many splendid buildings. His character was, however, stained by many acts of great cruelty to his own family, and to his subjects. His conduct in ordering the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem is in keeping with his whole reign. It is

said that he ordered the nobles attending his last illness to be executed at his decease, that his death might be regarded with general mourning.

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QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

1. Where did the Samaritans set up a rival temple to that of Jerusalem?
2. What does Josephus relate concerning the meeting of Alexander the Great and Jaddua, the high priest?
3. What is the Septuagint, and why was it so called? Give the date of its completion.
4. What abominations were committed in Jerusalem in the reign of Antiochus IV.
5. Who were the Maccabees? What does the name signify? Under which of them did Judea obtain its independence?
6. By whom was Herod the Great made king of Judea? Give instances of his cruelty. In what year did he rebuild the temple?

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