

KINGDOM SPIRIT

P O Box 279, Pleasant View, CO 81331

Phone 970-562-4874

e-mail ksm@fone.net

"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1601

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Continuing our study in the book of Matthew, we are ready for the 9th chapter. (Read Matt. 9:1-8) We mentioned that one of the things that Jesus had to do was to establish His authority. We see here the beginning of one of the ways that He felt He needed to do help accomplish this and that was to confront the scribes, Pharisees and the priests because of the false doctrine that they were teaching due to their manipulation of the law. Claiming to have authority to forgive sin put Him in a position equal with God and this would have probably been blasphemy had He not also had the power to heal in very powerful ways, so it was difficult for the scribes and Pharisees to charge Him and make it stick.

(Read Matt. 9:10-13) As we have studied in the Old Testament, both the Israelites and the Jews had come to rely on their sacrifices and rituals for their salvation. Even though God told them through the prophets that what He really desired of them was obedience to His law and showing mercy to each other. That reliance on what they could literally, physically do, i.e. their sacrifices and rituals was what got passed from generation to generation so that these scribes, Pharisees and priests of Christ's time were of the same mindset as their forefathers. To them it was unlawful to sit and eat with the publicans and known sinners. Christ is actually mocking them in a sense. They considered themselves righteous because of their keeping the rituals. As such, they saw no need for repentance or forgiveness. The

publicans and sinners did. Because the scribes, Pharisees, etc. considered themselves righteous, Christ is saying they had no need of Him. It was kind of a tongue in cheek thing.

(Read Matt. 9:14-17) What Christ was offering was new, at least to the people to whom He was talking. He is basically trying to lead them into the New Covenant. But it could not be done mixed in with the Old Covenant, especially as perverted as they had made it. I'm sure they did not understand what He meant with the two examples He gave them. This was before the day of non-shrinking cloth. If a new piece of cloth was sewn into an old garment that had a tear in it, the new cloth would have shrunk upon washing and actually made the tear worse. It was impossible to mix the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus was teaching with the traditions of men that the Old Covenant had become to them. The old bottles were pottery bottles, not glass, and would have lost some of their strength with use and age. Putting new wine in them would have run the risk of their not being strong enough to withstand the pressure of fermentation of the new wine. The traditions that the Jews had come to rely on could not stand against gospel of the kingdom that Christ was preaching.

(Read Matt. 9:18-19 and 23-26) This is the first story of Christ raising someone from the dead. It is important for us to know that when Christ or the apostles raised someone from the dead, it was back to mortal life, not immortal. These people eventually died just like everybody else. In this case the people had already started their funeral ceremonies. It is surprising that the ruler had the faith to know that Christ could heal her, but I doubt he had the faith to believe He could raise his daughter from the dead. Certainly

the people did not as they laughed at Jesus for saying that she was just sleeping.

(Read Matt. 9:20-22) As Jesus traveled to the ruler's home, this woman saw Him and believed that if she could only touch His garment, she would be healed. This was faith, faith that paid off when she was healed.

(Read Matt. 9:27-31) It is interesting to me that Christ told them that, "**According to your faith be it unto you.**" If they had not had the faith, but were just hoping, I would assume they would not have been healed. Christ's fame was beginning to spread and these two men helped all the more to spread it. How could you not sing the praises of a man who had healed your blindness everywhere you went?

(Read Matt. 9:32-34) This gives us a good idea of the arrogance of the Pharisees. To them, they were the only ones who had access to God, so for Christ to cast out demons, He had to do it by the power of whoever ruled the demons. He could not do it by the power of God, because He was not one of them.

Often times, demons or evil spirits are considered the reason for sickness. This could have been the case, but I do not believe it was the case every time. Because the people believed that the sickness or the disability was due to evil spirits, we're told that Christ cast out the demon and the person was healed. But I believe the cause could have often been from the same causes we have sickness and disability today.

(Read Matt: 9:35-38) This prayer that Christ told His disciples to pray was certainly answered following His resurrection and ascension. Many people whom the apostles led to conversion became missionaries themselves and the gospel of the kingdom spread over the then known world in only a matter of just a few years.

(Read Matt. 10:1-4) This gives us a list of all of the 12 apostles. With the possible exception of Judas Iscariot, these men were probably from Galilee which probably meant that they were of the tribe of Benjamin. If you recall, the tribe of Benjamin was given to Judah when the kingdom split after the death of Solomon and were called the light tribe. Whether that has significance with the apostles probably being Benjamites, I don't know for sure, but it could be a relatively easy conclusion. All of these men with the exception of Judas, and with the possible exception of John,

died martyr deaths. John may have also died a martyr death, but if he did he did so at a pretty old age. Their speech was enough different from the men of Jerusalem that they could be identified as Galileans. Simon the Canaanite was from the town of Cana, he was not a Canaanite in the sense of the Canaanites of the Old Testament. With Judah Iscariot, Iscariot meant "a man of Kerioth". There were two Kerioths at the time, one in Moab and one in Judah.

(Read Matt. 10:5-15) I got to wondering, as I studied this Scripture, if the disciples went out at that time, or if Jesus is giving them instructions for after His ascension. I'm not sure yet, but I see no evidence that they went anywhere other than following Him at this time. Note that He told His disciples to not go into the "way" of the Gentiles. I became curious, since I, like a lot of people first read this wrong. I looked up the word "way" and it comes from the Greek "*hodos*" which Young's Analytical Concordance defines as "road, journey, custom." He is not saying to not go to the Gentiles, but rather, as I read it, to not follow the customs of the Gentiles. Jesus is beginning a new thing here, a missionary effort that had not been done before; the Jews went to no one but Jews up to this point.

He tells them not to go to any city of the Samaritans. If you recall, when the Assyrians took the Samaria, the capital of Israel, and what was left of Israel captive, they brought in people from other Assyrian countries to populate the land, but because of the wild beasts killing the people, they also brought back some of the Levitical priests to sacrifice unto God to protect the people from the wild beasts. We dealt some with these people during the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. It is still the same people that are there at Christ's time. Later on, we will see Christ go to Samaria and spend a couple of days there and many people believed. After His resurrection, just prior to His ascension, He removed the prohibition against going to Samaria. He told His apostles in Acts 1:8 "**But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**" This established the order that the gospel was to be preached, first to Jerusalem, and finally to all the world.

Jesus tells the apostles to go to the **“lost sheep of the house of Israel”** The word “lost” is from the Greek word *“apollu” or “apollumi”* and is normally translated destruction. However, it is a combination of two words according to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance and if traced to their original meanings could be translated “punished and put away.” The kingdom of Israel had been punished (destroyed) and put away (put in captivity). So it is primarily the ex-Israelites of the Northern Kingdom that Jesus is talking about here. As we will see later, this is to whom they went after they had preached in Jerusalem.

His instructions to these apostles is interesting in that they were to take nothing with them as He said they would be furnished what they needed as He said in vs. 10, **“for the workman is worthy of his meat.”** They were to preach that the kingdom of heaven, or God, was at hand. Saying it was at hand was in effect saying that Christ was here on the earth. Later the message took on greater meaning in that the cross, the death, burial, resurrection, and the ascension has taken place.

I have said before that you can’t teach someone who does not want to learn. In effect, this is what Jesus told His disciples. They were not to waste time with those, whether individuals or cities, who did not want to learn.

(Read Matt. 10:16-23) We may feel that we have a difficult time these days trying to tell others the truth of the Bible, but in the days right after the Ascension and then at various times during history, sending them out as sheep in the midst of wolves seems a little mild. Even today, religion plays a major factor in breakup of marriages, breakup of families, etc., but it is usually denominational differences. To me it is extremely unfortunate that most people have not studied the Bible enough to know the real truth that they need to stand up for. Usually if someone tries to stand up for even one principle of God’s law, it will usually be someone using a denominational doctrine that will end up trying to destroy the messenger or the message or both. In the days following the Ascension Paul testifies adequately of the attitude of the majority of the Jews, or at least the Jewish hierarchy towards those who were following the Way (Christ’s Way) at the time. Prison, torture, or death or all of the above was in store for anyone they caught following Christ. Thousands were

killed in the Roman persecutions. Many more thousands were killed after the Papacy came to full power. Even today in other parts of the world, Christians are being severely persecuted for their Christian beliefs. If we look deep enough into the cause of most wars, in recent history at least, the primary object of those who are most responsible is to destroy Christianity.

The last part of verse 22 first struck me as being a little odd. I’m not sure how to express it. My first thought was that if someone endured until the end, of course he would be saved. Finally I looked up the word “saved” to see if I was missing something. It is translated from the Greek word *“sozo.”* It simply means to make or keep sound or safe. The other word that I considered is “end.” The Greek word means simply that, the end. So, the end of what? I think this may be the key. It could be the end of that person’s life, whether it comes by old age, or being martyred at an early age or whatever comes in between. It could mean the end of the age when Christ returns and the first resurrection occurs. It could mean the end of a particular period in history when persecution was ended for a period of time. After considering these, I believe it refers to the end of one’s life, however long that is and whatever happens during that life. If a person remains steadfast in his or her faith until the end of one’s life, the being saved comes after the first resurrection. I do not believe it is referring to salvation or justification.

Verse 23 also causes us to wonder. We might say with some assurance that there is not a town or city from Jesus’ time until now that the gospel has been preached in it at some time. However, we need to back up to verse 7 where Jesus told His apostles to preach saying, **“The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** We said last lesson when we read this verse, “They were to preach that the kingdom of heaven, or God, was at hand. Saying it was at hand was in effect saying that Christ was here on the earth. Later the message took on greater meaning in that the cross, the death, burial, resurrection, and the ascension had taken place.”

It is sometimes difficult for us to understand the difference between God’s will and His plan or purpose. Let me pause for a moment in our study to discuss this briefly as I think this will help us understand this 23rd verse better. Most of

the time in the New Testament, we find the word “will” translated from the Greek word, “*thelema*” Young’s Analytical Concordance defines this as will or wish. It is God’s will that we obey His law. It is His wish that we do so. He does not force us to do so even though that is His will or wish that we do so. In Romans 9 Paul is discussing the sovereignty of God and is using the Pharaoh as an example. Starting in verse 17 he says, **“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”** Paul is setting up an argument in which he takes both sides of the argument. He is pointing out that God caused Pharaoh to defy God and refuse to let the Israelites go out of Egypt. Then He punished Pharaoh for doing what God caused him to do. He goes on in verse 18, **“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth.”** God is sovereign, He can do whatever He wants to do by either showing mercy or the opposite, hardneth one’s heart to resist God. Then Paul takes the other side of the argument by pretending there is a person he is talking to who questions what Paul is saying, **“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?”** i.e. why does God find fault with a person for doing what God has caused him to do? Then he adds **“For who hath resisted his will?”** Here the word will is from the Greek word, “*boulema*” meaning counsel or purpose. So there is a purpose that man cannot resist. God’s will was that Pharaoh release the Israelites, but His purpose was that he would not release them until the tenth plague and then He punished Pharaoh because he did not release them as He willed him to do. We are getting in pretty deep here and we won’t understand the answer to the question in verse 19 until we have a thorough understanding of all that God has planned. But let me say for now that everything has a very good ending, even Pharaoh.

We see this same thing happen several times in Scripture. It was God’s will that Israel go into the land of Canaan when He first told them to, but it was His plan or purpose that they would rebel and stay in the wilderness for another 39 ½ years. It was God’s will that Israel and Judah both repent and turn back to Him, but it was His plan and purpose for them to go into their re-

spective captivities. He always gave them a chance to obey His will, but it was His plan and purpose that they would not.

Now, what does this have to do with verse 23? The apostles were to first preach that the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God was at hand. It was God’s will that the people of Judea would recognize Him as King of Kings. But it was His plan and purpose that they would not only reject Jesus from being king, but would kill Him. So when they first preached this, the kingdom was at hand, though this was not God’s plan and purpose. However, as we will see, He continued to preach the gospel of the kingdom and instructed the apostles to do the same. But it was obvious to the apostles that after His death and resurrection that the establishment of His kingdom here on the earth had not happened yet. Acts 1:6 records the last words they spoke to Jesus, **“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”** This would be a natural question since their commission was to preach **“the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** It probably wasn’t until the receiving of the earnest of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost 10 days later that they really began to understand. Now getting back to verse 23, as I said, I believe that from Jesus’ time until now, there has been some semblance of the gospel preached in every city or town in Israel, the gospel meaning good news. There is the gospel of salvation, the gospel of eternal life, etc, but I would venture to say that the gospel of the kingdom has been sadly lacking, the gospel of the kingdom being the good news of the whole plan of God. As a result there will be many who will not be able to attain to the first resurrection and be a part of that kingdom of rulers that was promised to Abraham many centuries ago. Again, I believe that it is the will of God that the gospel of the kingdom be preached in all the cities and towns of Israel, but it is His plan and purpose that there will be few that will hear it. Again, as with the Pharaoh, the end result will be very good. We just need to learn and understand the whole plan of God that we might attain to that first resurrection.

(Read Matt. 10:24-25) First a fact: the disciple is not above his master nor the servant above his lord. Then the thought for considera-

tion: Christ says that it is enough if the disciple can become equal to his master or teacher and if the servant can become equal to his lord, but if they call the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Jesus has already been called prince of the demons. Beelzebub was a Philistine god, I believe it means lord of the flies. He is inferring that He has been called that also. He is pointing out to the apostles that they are going to be called many things, but don't let it get to them. I am totally amazed at how people today react if they are called racist or anti-semitic or homophobic. I found it interesting when I was in college my first two years, a number of people called me racist though I roomed with a Mexican, had Indians rooming next door and across the hall and none of them called me racist. When a male foreign exchange student started school there, they brought him to me to help get him settled and acquainted with the college. I never understood why I was considered a racist, but it never did bother me. But to some people, it really shakes them up. Christ is saying don't let the name callers worry you.

We'll continue this discussion in our next issue. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

We are looking at the time and the prophets to Judah following the Assyrians taking Israel captive. We are ready for another of the minor prophets, Zephaniah. The name Zephaniah means "hidden of Jehovah, or he whom Jehovah hath hidden." Zephaniah dates his prophetic utterances as during the time of Josiah, king of Judah.

(Read Zephaniah 1:1-11) This is a prophecy concerning Jerusalem and Judah when the Babylonians come against it. Keep in mind that God is doing this because of the sins of Manasseh, Judah's former king. He says he is going to consume everything from off the land. The "stumblingblocks" in verse 3 refers to idols. Idol worship was the primary sin of Manasseh, thus the primary sin of the people. So we will see that special attention is paid to the idols and the priests of these idols, or false gods. In verse 4, Baal of course was one of the primary false gods worshipped by the people. The "Chemarims" refers to the priests to these false gods. The word means "black robed" as this was the dress of these priests. "Malcham" in verse 5 means "king-god or king-idol" and apparently was one of the gods of the Ammonites. It may be the same god as Molech. Note in verse 6 that God is putting those who have turned back from following Him and those that who had never sought Him in the same category. They will all be destroyed. The sacrifice that verses 7 and 8 mention is the turning of the people over to the king of Babylon. Note in verse 8 also that the royal house is to be included in the punishment. Keep this in mind when we study further the history of Judah.

When I read that He would also punish those that were clothed in "strange apparel" in

verse 8, the thought occurred to me that there might be a relationship with the parable that Christ gave in Matt. 22 concerning the man who came to the wedding feast without the wedding garment. (Read Matt. 22:1-14) In Zephaniah, the word “strange” apparently means “foreign.” I believe that the wedding garment in Matt. 22 refers to sanctification. In Zephaniah, the man in the strange apparel is to be punished with the majority of the people, but leaves the question of what happens to those not dressed in strange apparel. In Matt. the wedding feast parable is about the marriage of the Lamb. Those not sanctified, even though they may be justified as this man would appear to be since he responded to the invitation, will not be allowed to participate, i.e. will not be a part of the first resurrection. There were some who escaped the Babylonian captivity, but they were very few in number. These might be the answer to the question of what happens to those not dressed in strange apparel. I’m not sure that verse 8 here is a shadow of what happens at the first resurrection, but it appears to me that it could be.

Going back to Zephaniah, “those that leap upon the threshold” in verse 9, according to a note in the Companion Bible, refers to the servants of rulers sent to enter the houses of others and steal. “Maktesh” in verse 11 literally means “mortar,” but probably referred to a market district of Jerusalem.

(Read Zephaniah 1:12-18) God is making sure that the people of Jerusalem know that He is bringing judgment upon them. The term “settled on their lees” means settled into complacency. It is a reference to wine being settled upon its dregs, i.e. once the dregs have settled in the wine, there is no more action. These people are saying to themselves that God will do neither good nor evil. I believe we have a great majority of people today with this attitude. Even after a serious natural catastrophe like hurricane Sandy, when people say that God caused it, they very quickly settle back into their complacent posture and seem to give no more thought to God one way or the other. As we approach the end of this age, I can’t help but feel this is a very dangerous attitude just as it was with the people of Jerusalem prior to the Babylonian captivity.

Verse 13 could be looked at two ways. One is that the people will build their houses there in Jerusalem, but will be taken in the captivity and

won’t occupy them. The other is that when taken into captivity, they will become slaves to build for the Babylonians, but not for themselves. The same would apply to the vineyards and the wine.

The repeat of “is near, it is near” makes this warning very emphatic. As we have said before, the people of Jerusalem believed that because they had the temple, God was not going to allow any harm to come to them, so they did not take the warnings of the prophets seriously. The added emphasis in statements like this were intended to wake the people up. God through Zephaniah is working very hard to make the people aware that God’s judgment was coming upon them no matter what. The rest of the chapter stresses this very strongly. Riches, status, power will not save them. The judgment is over the whole land, not just upon a few.

This judgment wasn’t just coming upon Judah, but the nations around her as well because of their sins. (Read Zephaniah 2:1-3) I assume that the undesirable nation referred to here is Judah. It is the first in a list of nations to come under the judgment of God by way of the Babylonians. (Read Zephaniah 2:4-7) Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, the Cherethites, the Philistines and other nations of the coast of the Mediterranean are all to feel the effects of the Babylonians. Many of these nations disappeared from history following the Babylonian purge of the area. Judah is the only nation, of which we have Biblical history, that were taken into captivity. Many of these other nations were totally destroyed. In verse 6, the “dwellings” could mean pastures and the word for “cottages” literally means excavations which could refer to underground shelters or cisterns. I’m not sure what verse 7 refers to unless it is that these lands became part of Judah when the Judahites returned from their captivity.

(Read Zephaniah 2:8-11) I believe God is prophesying the virtual destruction of both of these nations. This final judgment is the result of the way that they treated Israel as they came up out of Egypt. Had they responded to Moses’ request to let them pass through their land, I believe they would have been blessed, but their refusal not only brought on war at the time, but now final destruction.

(Read Zephaniah 2:12-15) Ethiopia is added to the list and last, Assyria is to be destroyed. Keep in mind that it is the nation, or kingdom that

is to be destroyed, not necessarily all the people. God, through Zephaniah, is prophesying the fall and destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. This fall of Nineveh spelled the end of Assyria as an empire and pretty much as a nation.

(Read Zephaniah 3:1-7) This is speaking of Jerusalem. Even though God brought judgment on the nations around Jerusalem, the people still did not take notice and repent. God is going to bring judgment upon Jerusalem.

(Read Zephaniah 3:8-12) Like most of the other prophets we have studied, Zephaniah also looks down through the centuries to the end of this age and sees God's deliverance, to the gathering of all nations with a view toward the final kingdom of God. Dr. Bullinger has a note in his Companion Bible concerning **"a pure language"** in verse 9. He says it means "a lip purified: i.e. a clean lip in contrast with unclean lips." I do not believe that the phrase, **"all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy"** is to be taken literally. As we have studied before, fire often represents God's law, or judgment. I believe that is what is meant in this phrase. When God's law becomes the law of all the land, we could say that all the earth is devoured by it. The dispersed of Israel will return to God. He tells Judah that she will no longer be haughty and prideful in His Holy Mountain, i.e. His Kingdom. The marginal rendering of **"afflicted and poor"** in verse 12 is **"gentle and humble."**

(Read Zephaniah 3:13) The "remnant of Israel" equals "the Sons of God" in the New Testament, i.e. those who have part in the first resurrection that will rule with Christ for the thousand years.

(Read Zephaniah 3:14-20) That time will be a time to sing praises to our God. Verse 15 tells us that the King of Israel, i.e. Jesus Christ, will be in our midst and we will not see evil any more. The rest of the chapter needs no explanation. It is clearly speaking of the time of the second coming of our LORD, Jesus Christ to rule and reign here on the earth.

Let's go back to the history and proceed a little further in it. It's important to pay close attention as it is easy to become confused on who is who so far as the kings are concerned. Remember that Josiah had picked a fight with the king of Egypt and was killed in the battle. (Read II Kings 23:30-35) In verse 31 we're told that Jehoahaz's

maternal grandfather was Jeremiah of Libnah. I think there is more than a possibility that this Jeremiah and the prophet Jeremiah that wrote the book of Jeremiah are one and the same. In the book of Jeremiah, we're told that Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that were in Anathoth. It would not appear that Anathoth was where the priest's permanent home was, but rather a place where a number of priests had gathered, though there is no reason given for them being there. So it is speculation on my part that the two Jeremiahs are the same person. However, we will see that Jeremiah ended up with the charge of the king's daughters which if the two Jeremiahs are the same he would have been their great-grandfather.

Jehoahaz only reigned 3 months before being taken captive by Pharaohnechoh took him prisoner in the land of Hamath and later took him to Egypt where he died. This is the same Pharaoh who Josiah picked a fight with and ended up being killed in the battle. The Pharaoh then took Jehoahaz's half-brother, Eliakim, and placed him on the throne of Judah and changed his name to Jehoiakim. So for the first time in the Davidic monarchy, we have a brother following his brother to the throne. He complied with the demand of Pharaohnechoh and paid him a high tax in silver and gold by in turn taxing the people of Judah to pay for it.

Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began his reign and he reigned 11 years. We're told that he did evil in the sight of the LORD. (Read II Kings 23:36-37 & 24:1-7) Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon had begun to expand his empire and had apparently caused the king of Egypt to stay home and not come into Judah again. However, during the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar came against Judah and put a heavy tax burden on them. This lasted for three years before Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. We're not told much more about what Jehoiakim did during his reign, but he died a relatively young man and his son Jehoiachin took the throne.

(Read II Kings 24:8-17) At eighteen years of age, Jehoiachin took the throne and we're told that he, like his father, did evil in the sight of the LORD. Nebuchadnezzar returned and laid siege to the city of Jerusalem. After reigning only 3 months, Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and the king of Babylon took him, his mother,

his wives, his princes, and his servants plus all the treasures from the temple and the king's house and the princes (rulers), mighty men of valour, craftsmen and smiths captive back to Babylon, some ten thousand in all. It was in this group that Daniel and his three friend were taken as young boys. He left only the poorest of the land and he took Mattaniah, a full brother to Jehoahaz and half brother to Jehoiakim, and made him king over Judah. So we now have or have had three brothers as king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar changed the name of Mattaniah to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to reign and he reigned 11 years. (Read II Kings 24:18-20) Like his brothers, he also did that which was evil. Verse 20 tells us that **“through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah....that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.”** It didn't take Nebuchadnezzar very long to return and besiege the city.

(Read II Kings 25:1-7) The city was then broken up in the 11th year of Zedekiah's reign. Though the king and the men of war tried to sneak out of the city and flee, they were caught and returned to the city. King Zedekiah had to watch as all of his sons were slain and then his eyes were put out and he was taken bound to Babylon.

(Read II Kings 25:8-17) A month later, Nebuchadnezzar sent Nebuzaradan, his captain of the guard, to Jerusalem where he burned the temple, the king's house and the houses of all the great men of Jerusalem and then he broke down the walls of the city. He took all but the very poor of the city captive back to Babylon along with the brass, the vessels and utensils of brass, gold and silver from the temple.

We'll discuss this more later, but at this point it would appear that the promise that God made to David, that there would never fail that a man of

David's lineage would sit on David's throne and that his throne would last forever, had failed. We will have to study the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel to find how this was not the case, but with Jehoahaz in prison in Egypt, Jehoiakim dead, and all of Zedekiah's sons killed and Zedekiah in prison in Babylon and Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim deposed from the throne and taken to Babylon, there doesn't appear to be anybody left. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah were the only sons of Josiah.

There is still some important information about these three kings that we need to know. We will cover it in our next issue. JRL