**“The Throne of David” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 4, 13.**

E. J. Waggoner

Again we return to the children of Israel in the land of Canaan. We pass by the time of the judges, of their apostasies and consequent afflictions, and come to the time when the kingdom had been established, and given to David. The record says that “when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies” (2 Samuel 7:1), the king proposed to build a house for the Lord. The prophet Nathan approved of his project, but afterwards, at the command of the Lord, he told him that he should not build the house. After briefly rehearsing his dealings with the children of Israel, the Lord said: “Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.” 2 Samuel 7:10. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.1}

Note this text carefully. When these words were spoken to David, the children of Israel had been in the land of Canaan four hundred years, and at that very time David, as king of all Israel, was in quiet possession of the land, for, “the Lord had given him rest round about from all is enemies;” and yet, ignoring all this, the Lord promised to plant his people in a land of *their own*, and to give them rest from their enemies. What could the Lord have meant by that? Simply this, that the possession of the small territory of the land of Canaan, was not the rest that God designed for his people. Not yet had the promise to Abraham been fulfilled, and the Lord had not forgotten it. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.2}

At this time the Lord identified David with the promise, almost as closely as was Abraham. The Lord said to him: “And thine house and *thy kingdom shall be established for ever* before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.” 2 Samuel 7:16. And in praising God for the largeness of his promise, David said: “Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant’s house for a great while to come.... Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God; for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people *Israel to be a people unto thee for ever*; and thou, Lord, art become their God.” 2 Samuel 7:18-24. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.3}

Starting with this specific promise that David’s kingdom should be established forever, and that Israel should be a people forever, we shall very briefly trace the history of that kingdom. We find that it continued prosperous and undivided only through the remainder of his reign, and through the reign of his son Solomon. When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam succeeded to the throne. 1 Kings 11:43. No sooner was Rehoboam seated upon the throne than the people came to him to learn what would be the policy of his reign, and asking that he would lighten the burdens imposed on them by his father. Following the counsel of the young men, Rehoboam replied: “My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.” 1 Kings 12:14. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.4}

“So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; to your tents, O Israel; now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.... So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel; there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.” Verses 16-20. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.5}

This division of the kingdom was effected in the year 975 B.C. It was in fulfillment of a prophecy made to Jeroboam, by Ahijah, which is recorded in the eleventh chapter of 1 Kings. The reason why the greater part of the kingdom was to be taken away from the house of Solomon, was thus stated by the prophet: “Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee; (but he shall have one tribe for my servant David’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel;) because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.” Verses 31-33. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.6}

Thus the kingdom, with the exception of one tribe, was taken from the house of David, on account of Solomon’s terrible idolatry; and to Jeroboam the Lord said: “And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.” Verses 37, 38. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.7}

But Jeroboam did not heed the words of the Lord. As soon as he came to the throne, he made two calves for the people to worship, so as to keep them from going to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (1 Kings 12:26-30); and although he was reproved by the prophet of the Lord, he “returned not from his evil way,” but “made Israel to sin,” for which reason the Lord cut him off. Read 1 Kings 13 and 14. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.8}

The succeeding kings were no better; for among all the kings of Israel we find not one good man. They were all idolaters, and some of them were men of the vilest character, without a single redeeming trait. The children of Israel sinned against the Lord “and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel ...And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree; and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger.... And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.” See 2 Kings 16:7-23. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 201.9}

So in the year 721 B.C., after the kingdom of Israel had continued 254 years, and had made a record of wickedness, which has probably never been exceeded by any nation, the Lord removed them “out of his sight.” In that year the king of Assyria took Samaria the capital of the kingdom, “and carried Israel away into Assyria,” and filled their places with “men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim.” 2 Kings 17:24. From this date the kingdom of Israel has no more a place in history. {BEST July 1, 1889, p. 202.1}

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E. J. Waggoner

**THE JEWISH PEOPLE REJECT CHRIST**

The history of the kingdom of Judah was somewhat different. Some of the kings were as wicked as any of the kings of Israel, and some of them were men of eminent piety. There was a succession of apostasies, of judgments, and of repentance and apostasy. Toward the close of its history the prophet Jeremiah said: “Thus said the Lord unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; and say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates; Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain for ever.” Jeremiah 17:19-25. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.1}

A few remarks concerning God’s purpose with Israel may be in place here. He chose Abraham because Abraham had a heart to serve him, and would keep the light of God’s truth from dying out. He called the Israelites out from Egypt, so that they might serve him; and he made them the depositories of his holy law, in order that they might hold up the standard of truth to the surrounding nations. In numerous places we learn that provision was made that the strangers who wished to serve the Lord could become a part of Israel, and heirs of the promise equally with the descendants of Abraham. If the children of Israel had been true to their high calling, and had not departed from God, or, having departed and repented, had remained faithful, they would ever have continued as a nation. And the text that we have just read indicates that in that case Jerusalem itself would have stood forever as the capital of the kingdom. What transformation it would have undergone to make it suitable for the eternal habitation of the saints, we cannot tell. On the other hand, the following judgment, if they should depart from God, was uttered by Jeremiah: “But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” Jeremiah 17:27. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.2}

These warnings were not heeded. In Jeremiah chapter 25 and 27, we find the announcement of their captivity, because of their refusal to obey God. This was the complete overthrow of the kingdom of Judah in the reign of Zedekiah. Although, after seventy years of captivity, all who wished were given full liberty to return to Jerusalem, and the city and the temple were rebuilt, no king since that time has ever sat upon the throne of Israel. The Jews were in Babylon till that empire was overthrown by the Medes and Persians, B.C. 538. Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia, gave them permission to return to their own land, but they had no king, and they existed only through the sufferance of the kings of Persia. Alexander the Great showed them favours, and to him they acknowledged allegiance. When the empire of Greece was divided at the death of Alexander, they were subject by turns to different kings until finally they turned to the rising Roman power for complete protection, and remained subject to them as long as they had any existence as a nation. But before we speak of their final fate, we must look at a prophecy concerning the kingdom, which was uttered by Ezekiel toward the last of Zedekiah’s reign. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.3}

After foretelling the invasion by the king of Babylon, the prophet said: “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him.” Ezekiel 21:25-27. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.4}

In this prophecy the history of the world from that time until the end of time is briefly told. When the diadem was removed from the head of Zedekiah, the kingdom passed into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Not simply the narrow limits of the kingdom over which Zedekiah ruled, but all the kingdoms of the earth, or, rather, the dominion of the whole earth, was given to Nebuchadnezzar. See Jeremiah 27:5-7; Daniel 2:37, 38. Then, said the Lord, “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it.” Three kings reigned in Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar, and then the first overturning took place, and the empire of the world passed into the hands of the Medes and the Persians. See Ezra 1:2. This took place B.C. 538. The Persian Empire, for the Median portion was overshadowed by the Persian element, lasted for 297 years, until B.C. 331. Then the second overturning took place, and the empire of Greece had the universal control in the earth. See Daniel 2:39. After the death of Alexander the empire was divided into four parts, each striving for supreme control; but by the year 168 B.C. the third overturning had taken place, and the world came under the dominion of the Romans. This was to be the last overturning, said the prophet, “until He come whose right it is,” when it should be given to Him. The one whose the earth is by right, is Christ, for the Father has said to Him, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee...the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” Psalm 2:8. Moreover, Christ has purchased the possession by bearing the curse which came upon it in consequence of Satan’s maliciousness, and which constituted the evil one’s sole claim to it. Thus He bought Satan’s technical and usurped claim, and became sole heir to the whole world. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.5}

But the promise to give the dominion to Christ did not have reference to His first advent, as will appear from the following:- {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.6}

1. At the first advent of Christ the Romans ruled the whole world (Luke 2:1); and that empire continued, powerful and undivided, for nearly four hundred years afterward. Although the Jews rejected Jesus, they had not the power to put him to death, and He was formally condemned and executed by the Romans. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.7}

2. Just before His crucifixion, Jesus wept over Jerusalem, saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Matthew 23:37-39. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.8}

The rejection of the Messiah and filled up the cup of the inequity of the Jewish nation. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” John 1:11. If they had accepted Him, they might, even at that late day, and after so many apostasies, have still remain the chosen people of God, through whom the nations of the world should be enlightened, and around whose standard of the faithful would flock. As Jesus thought of what they might have been if they had received Him, He wept, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Luke 19:42. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.9}

Never again would the tribes go up to Mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth; no longer should the gorgeous temple be called a house of prayer for all nations. When Christ uttered that last cry upon the cross, “It is finished,” the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, showing that their house was left and to them desolate. Less than forty years later (A.D. 70), the Romans besieged Jerusalem and utterly destroy it, fulfilling the words of Christ recorded in Matthew 24:2, and Luke 19:43, 44. This destruction, which marked the uttered extension of the Jewish people as a nation, also prefigured the final destruction of all that reject the gospel. {BEST July 15, 1889, p. 218.10}