

Judah's Blessing

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of kings. God promised Judah that the scepter would not depart from his lineage until Jesus returned as King of Kings to possess it. God promised David that he would NEVER be without a child ruling over the house of Israel. God swore by Himself, and compared His covenant to David with the sun rising in the morning; if one thing is sure, so is the other.

God promised that Abraham's children would number in the hundreds of millions today, in OUR time. Where are they?? He promised them the gates of their enemies, the choicest lands on the Earth with the greatest wealth any nation in history has ever possessed. Surely the physical nation called "Israel" today does not fulfill ANY of these prophecies. So again... where are they?

God's promises were kept. How, or when, remains to be seen. But if you believe God, you know that not a generation went by without a Davidic king ruling over Israel. And you know that Israel has inherited, *and today possesses*, the best of the best of the world. Where are they?

LESSON 47: JUDAH'S BLESSING

We have already traced the blessing through the father of nations and the princess of nations (Abraham and Sarah) through to Judah of whom God said, "*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come...*" (**Genesis 49:10**).

It is precisely because of this promise to Judah that the Jews had the first RIGHT to the spiritual promises! (**John 4:22, Romans 1:16**). Because it belonged to them, legally! They were promised this blessing by God, and until they proved themselves unworthy, it was NECESSARY that the gospel be preached to them first (**Acts 3:25-26**). The gospel HAD to begin at Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish nation (**Luke 24:47**). **Until they rejected it, salvation BELONGED to them!** (**John 4:22, Acts 13:46**).

And since Judah held by far the greatest blessing of Abraham, his lineage was very important to God. So when Judah's oldest son Er married Tamar and proved to be wicked, God killed him to keep him from inheriting and abusing the precious blessing. The same was true of Onan, and Judah was afraid the same thing would happen to Shelah (**Genesis 38:2-11**).

Time went by, Tamar got tired of waiting for Shelah, and tricked Judah into marrying her (the hard way) in **verses 12-27**. There is clearly some hypocrisy floating around there if you look for it, but we need to keep moving. So now Tamar was pregnant with Judah's 4th and 5th born sons, twins. When they were being born, one put his hand out and the midwife tied a red cord to his hand. Then he pulled back his hand and the other child was born.

Like with Esau and Jacob in the womb, these two children were struggling over the blessing of Abraham before they were even born. Zerah put his hand out first, but Pharez was technically the firstborn by Tamar. It's something of a murky area of legality who was the firstborn, and that plays a significant part in future history. So does the red thread.

So as with Joseph's sons, and as it had been for four straight generations, the eldest did not inherit the blessing. And when Pharez was born, the midwife said "this breach be upon you". Translators differ on the exact meaning, but it was clear that Pharez broke through ahead of his brother scrambling to be the firstborn. **And the midwife prophetically held him responsible for whatever happened as a result.**

Skipping ahead, Pharez inherited the blessing and *Zerah* got... wait for it... zero (yes, that's a shameless pun). Through Pharez the royal line is traced through to Rahab the harlot (Rachab in Greek), and on through Jesse to David (**Matthew 1:3-6**) and then on to Christ. But let's look a little more closely at this "breach".

THE BREACH OF PHAREZ

It's strange because in Hebrew, the name Zerah means "seed". No doubt a reference to the promised seed of the woman (**Genesis 3:15**), the seed of Abraham (**Galatians 3:16**), in whom all nations would be blessed. **But Zerah did not receive the birthright of Abraham!** And so in spite of his name, in spite of the fact that his skin touched air before his brothers, in spite of the fact that he had a scarlet thread which implied the inheritance of Christ (see below), **he didn't receive any of these things! He was set up for them, but got none of them! They were stolen from him!**

But the midwife pronounced a curse on the Pharez family, that "this breach would be upon them", in other words, that they would pay for this breach one day. The only way they could pay would be to restore the birthright to Zerah.

This is very important, so I'm going to repeat it. The person who would have been born first, Zerah, and thus should have inherited the throne of Judah – which later became the throne of David, and ultimately the throne of Jesus Himself – was cheated out of his inheritance by Pharez who stole the inheritance by shoving him out of the way and getting out of the womb first.

The midwife saw this and declared "this breach (theft of the birthright) be upon you". In other words, that which a man (or unborn babe) sows, that shall he also reap (**Galatians 6:7**). So if he by unjust means obtained the crown, he will not keep it (**Proverbs 28:8**).

Some day, this "breach" must be visited upon Pharez – that was the midwife's prophecy! One day justice must be done, and there is only one way to do that: **someday Pharez's descendants must lose the birthright and the birthright be given to the eldest, the one with the scarlet thread!**

Meanwhile, as the eldest – even though he cheated – Pharez was to inherit the crown and spiritual blessings promised to Judah. This did happen when David, a descendant of Pharez, was made king. But then something remarkable happened; remember, God still owed Zerah the promise which had been stolen from him; yet David was so faithful that God bound Himself with a NEW promise to Pharez when He promised David that one of his children would ALWAYS sit on a throne ruling over some tribes of Israel.

In order for God to keep BOTH of these promises, something extraordinary had to happen! Zerah *had* to be restored as the head of Judah one day; yet a descendant of David, thus a descendant of Pharez, had to remain king of Israel FOREVER!

There is only one possible way for this to happen; only one way for the breach of Pharez to ever be healed! **Somehow a female heir of David had to marry a male heir of Zerah!** In this way, Zerah could once again be first in Israel; and one of David's heirs could remain king forever!

ZERAH AND SONS

Zerah is Hebrew, and in Hebrew no vowels are written, and H doesn't really exist either. So this name is basically written ZR, with vowels inserted wherever the translator thinks they should go. Thus, ZeRah is the same name as eZRa. So "ZeRahite" is the same as "ZaRhite" (**Numbers 26:20**), and also the same as "eZRahite" which we'll get to in a moment. Strange as it sounds in English, all these names refer to the same man and the same family.

Zerah had five sons; Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara (**1 Chronicles 2:6**). Zimri is never mentioned elsewhere and may have died young [speculation alert!]. The other four sons were renowned for their wisdom, and 500 years later Solomon was compared to them and, due to God's gift of wisdom, surpassed them (**1 Kings 4:31**). Note that there is no question that these "Ezrahites" are the sons of Zerah, for four sons of Zerah are mentioned together, with slight spelling variations.

Two of these sons, Heman and Ethan, had psalms written to them (**Psalms 88:1, 89:1**). A *Maschil* means a psalm of instruction, something to learn from. David wrote these psalms about these long-dead sons of Zerah and their families – but why would he do that?

Remember, David was a member of the breach family; his ancestor, Pharez, stole the blessing from Zerah to whom it belonged. Thus the guilt for "the breach being upon" Pharez fell to David, the current head of Pharez' house. And so it is only natural for David to prophesy to the rightful heirs, the children of Heman and Ethan, **about the return of the birthright to them.**

Psalms 89 is almost exclusively about the covenant God made to David. Why address that to Ethan, the "competing heir" to Judah's throne? To gloat? Of course not. The only reason to address this to him *at all* is to tell Ethan how Pharez's breach will be healed! There can be no other reason why it would be done at all, and God does *nothing* without a reason!

Knowing that, we can look at this Psalm for clues. If Zimri did indeed die leaving no heirs, or in some other way cut himself out of the birthright, **Psalms 89** is addressed to Ethan the second-eldest (the oldest listed in **1 Kings 4:31**) who would be the rightful heir to Zerah's legacy.

In **Psalms 89:1-2** and **5-18**, David tells Ethan that God is faithful and will not forget any of His covenants (such as His promise to Zerah through the midwife, that Pharez would be held accountable for the breach). Then in **verses 3-4** and **19-29** David tells Ethan about the eternal covenant God made with him.

But then in **verses 30-37**, David tells Ethan what God told him, that if his children sinned – and everyone knew they would – that God would punish his children, **but not so much that it would break His covenant that one of his children would retain a throne somewhere!**

Finally, in **verses 38-52** David, speaking prophetically of the fate of his descendants, mourns that God has “cast his throne down to the ground”! And – *apparently*, to everyone watching! – God **BROKE** His covenant with David (**verse 39**)! *The entire world believes this happened today!* **But we know better – we trust God more than that!**

God “apparently” broke His covenant, David says **in a letter addressed to Zerah’s heir**, because God *apparently* cast David’s throne to the ground **WHEN GOD GAVE IT TO ZERAH!** But WE know that God didn’t, because WE know there *was* a way for God to keep BOTH covenants! David’s throne had to UNITE with the throne of Zerah, and David’s throne had to be LOWERED while Zerah’s throne was EXALTED!

And the **ONLY** way to do that is if one of David’s female descendants in the royal line married a male heir of Zerah’s line! But if that happened, to the entire world, *it would LOOK like David’s throne had ended* – when in fact, it was still going strong **but in a new place, under a new name!!**

And we are even given a CLUE to that new place in this very Psalm, when David relays God’s promise to him, “*I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers*” (**verse 25**). Though it does not quite seem to be the primary context, in **Isaiah 58:12** God DOES plainly prophesy that someday the breach will be healed. We know the breach of Pharez **MUST** be healed, and this verse seems to say the same thing, even though it is out of context.

If it IS indeed talking about the breach of Pharez, then it tells us the person who repairs the breach *will raise up the foundations of many GENERATIONS* – that is, a new FAMILY that will last a long time will be founded at this HEALING of the breach!

THE RED THREAD

On with the “thread” of history, there is a curious coincidence involving Rahab and the spies sent to prepare for the invasion of Jericho. The whole story is in **Joshua 2**, but I want to call your attention to **verses 15-21**.

Isn’t it odd that this woman, a Gentile prostitute who would soon marry a descendant of Pharez (who had caused a breach over a red thread), **was saved by hanging a red rope out her window?** This is one of the only examples in the Bible of such a detail; why red? Why a rope, and not a flag or a pot in the window? This is a strange coincidence.

The color scarlet, in addition to be using in the temple for several things, signified wealth in several places; for example **2 Samuel 1:24**, **Proverbs 31:21**. It’s also associated with sin, as in **Isaiah 1:18** and **Revelation 17:4**; what do these things have in common? **Matthew 27:28**.

Jesus was mockingly clothed in scarlet by the Romans, but they were unwittingly fulfilling God’s plans. Jesus was born to be a ruler (**John 18:37**). Was scarlet a symbol of the ruling class? **Daniel 5:7**. The ruling class had the power to forgive sins against their own laws; likewise Jesus had the power to forgive sins against His Father’s laws by virtue of the *scarlet* blood He shed.

All of this was contained, in symbol, in the red thread of Rahab and the red thread of Zerah; paradoxically however, Zerah did not inherit the blessings indicated by the red thread... that is, not yet...

A ROOT AND A BRANCH

Ruth was another Gentile who married into the royal line and became the daughter-in-law of Rahab, who was blessed in **Ruth 4:11-12** with promises of Jesus (compare to **Micah 5:2** and **Matthew 2:6**). Her grandson was Jesse. And Jesse was unremarkable, but he was a pivotal point in prophecy.

In **Isaiah 11:1-5, 10**, God prophesied that a shoot would come out of the stem of Jesse (comparing him to a tree) and that a branch would grow out of his roots. What are Jesse's roots? His branches? Look at your own family "tree". Your ancestry – your *roots* – go back into the mists of time, branching out more as they go further back. You – the trunk – are in the middle. And if you have children, then they show as *branches* in your family tree above you.

So this symbol is saying that a ROOT of Jesse – his ancestor – would rise and the Gentiles would seek to him; **Romans 15:8-12** clearly shows this ROOT is Jesus Christ. Because if you traced your family tree back far enough, it would stop branching and start to narrow; the roots would come together with one man – Adam, and His "Father", His Creator, Jesus Christ (**Luke 3:38**). So Jesse's deepest ROOT was Jesse's *Creator*.

But there is also a BRANCH that is going to come out of Jesse; a *descendant* of his. And this descendant is, as the prophecy clearly indicates, Jesus Christ as well! **Jesus is BOTH the root AND the branch of Jesse – both his ancestor and his descendant!** Jesus Himself posed this same riddle to the Pharisees in His day in **Matthew 22:41-46**.

If Jesus was David's Lord (Creator, Elder, Ancestor), how was He also his Son? The Pharisees had no answer; but now you do. Because Jesus was David's ROOT and his BRANCH as well! **Revelation 22:16** says this plainly.

DAVID

Now we come to David. As you've read many times, God made unconditional promises to David that he would never lose the kingdom. How long would his descendants rule Israel? **Psalms 89:3-4, 20-37**. So David's throne was as permanent as sunshine. Has sunshine ceased? Then so has David's throne. If not, then neither has it.

Higher critics and faithless naysayers who try to rationalize away the Bible will tell you that Jesus already took over David's throne. First, if that *were* true, it meant that God had let David's throne sit empty for SIX HUNDRED YEARS before Jesus took it over – which would have broken God's word long before Jesus was ever born!

Secondly... DID Jesus ALREADY take over David's throne? Ask HIM! **John 18:36**. As of that time, Jesus' kingdom *did not yet exist on this Earth!* Is Jesus GOING to sit on David's throne? **Acts 2:29-30**. But has it happened *yet*? **Verses 31-36**. Get that! Jesus is sitting in His FATHER'S throne, His HEAVENLY THRONE (**Hebrews 8:1**). And He will be *there* – and NOT on the throne of DAVID, an EARTHLY throne, until... when? **UNTIL the Father makes His foes His footstool!**

When EXACTLY does Jesus inherit the throne of David? **Revelation 11:15**. How did Jesus compare His return to heaven? **Luke 19:11-12**. Jesus went to heaven to GET a kingdom for Himself, and THEN to return! And why did He say this? **Because the disciples thought He was going to take over the throne of David RIGHT THEN AND THERE! Just like everyone on Earth believes today that He did... BUT HE DIDN'T!**

He went to heaven to GET that kingdom; and He will take over that throne at His SECOND coming, not His first! The throne of David is an Earthly throne, a physical throne, and **a throne that must not cease to exist until Shiloh returns to claim it! Therefore, it hasn't ceased to exist to this day, for Shiloh has not yet returned!**

THE COLLAPSE OF DAVID'S THRONE?

Josiah was the last good king of Judah. But God had already determined to destroy Judah, no matter how great Josiah was (**2 Kings 23:25-27**). Judah was going to be destroyed as the nation of Israel had been. But because of Josiah's righteousness, God kept the evil from happening in his lifetime (**2 Kings 22:15-20**).

After his death his son, the next king, was evil and died. The next king, Jehoiachin, was evil, and Nebuchadnezzar carried him away captive to Babylon. He, incidentally, was ancestor of the Zerubbabel whom you meet in Zechariah and Haggai, and ultimately the ancestor of Mary, Jesus' mother.

The next and last king was Zedekiah. He was also evil (despite having a few good moments), and after a long series of battles and sieges and prophetic warnings which were ignored, Zedekiah was finally taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. But not before Nebuchadnezzar killed all princes of the royal house and every possible male heir (**2 Kings 25:1-7**).

Was this the death of the Davidic dynasty? As far as the world believes, the last king to descend from David was Zedekiah. But if that's true, God broke His promises to both David and Judah, and it also means the sun won't come up tomorrow and the moon will disappear from the sky!

How could God have kept His word, and the entire world not know it? To answer that, we have to study the life's mission of a very important and badly unappreciated prophet...

JEREMIAH'S MISSION

The name Jeremiah is often used as an epithet today, to sneer "oh, you're just a Jeremiad!" – that is, a doom-and-gloom naysayer.

But Jeremiah was among the greatest prophets and one of the most influential men in history. Jeremiah was appointed while a young man, probably not over 30 and possibly much younger, in a time of relative righteousness in Judah under good king Josiah, about 629 BC (**Jeremiah 1:1-8**).

Pay close attention to the details of Jeremiah's mission in **verses 9-10**. God doesn't waste words! If you want to understand the Bible, **you must trust that EVERY WORD has a meaning and EVERY WORD is there for a reason!** Here God, in what seems like a redundant fashion, lays out Jeremiah's commission:

1. He is in authority **OVER** the *nations AND kingdoms*. Not just one!
2. To root out
3. To pull down
4. To destroy
5. To throw down

6. To build

7. To plant

#'s 2-5 look like synonyms but in fact each one refers to a very specific thing Jeremiah is going to watch over. But what's really important is that #'s 6-7 REVERSE some of the previous damage! #7 is the opposite of #2 and #6 is the opposite of #3! (see **Jeremiah 24:6** for proof of that).

This means not only is Jeremiah going to watch – and help – God root out, pull down, destroy and throw down Judah... he is ALSO going to watch, and help, God build and plant it again!

In **Jeremiah 1:11-12** God symbolically gives Jeremiah the almond rod of priesthood authority, just as He had given it to Aaron to quiet the dispute over who carried His authority (**Numbers 17:8-10**). In **Jeremiah 1:13-19**, God foretold that Judah's enemies would come from the north – from Assyria, who dwelt to the north of Israel – and promised Jeremiah protection throughout the whole mission.

Most of the book of Jeremiah is about him repeatedly carrying God's words to the people, having them rebel, and doing it again. It's good stuff, but not our topic today. In **Jeremiah 15:4-5** the context is set as Jerusalem and the Jews in general; Jeremiah interrupts God to complain about himself in **verse 10**, and God answers him *and continues to talk about Judah at the same time*, **in duality**, in **verses 11-14**.

This is the first time God promises that a remnant of Judah will survive the coming destruction – and implies that Jeremiah is responsible for their survival, calling them *HIS* remnant, even though Jeremiah was apparently unmarried (**Jeremiah 16:1-2**). At the very least he did not marry until he left Judah 40 years later.

But another important fact from **Jeremiah 15:14** is that Judah and Jeremiah would **go into a land which they didn't know!** They KNEW Babylon. They knew the countries around them like Egypt, Syria, Babylon and Greece. They were going to go somewhere ELSE! These are important facts that will help unravel this mystery later, so remember them!

Regarding this “remnant” of Judah, read what Isaiah had prophesied two hundred years earlier in **Isaiah 37:31-32**. Notice this same remnant of Jeremiah that escapes captivity will *take root downward* and *bear fruit upwards*. Two key facts there; first, it means this remnant of Judah must be PLANTED, which God told Jeremiah was going to be HIS job!

Second, go back to Jesse's “root and branch” analogy. It means when this remnant of Judah reached their new home in a strange faraway land, they would “take root downward” and “bear fruit upward”. Bearing fruit is easy to see – they were to have children and extend the family tree upwards. **But if the analogy is consistent, they must also tie their roots into their ancestry in this new home...** which doesn't make sense. Yet.

THE REMNANT

Jeremiah 39:9 makes it look like this remnant went off to Babylon with Nebuchadnezzar. Most of the world, those who bother to think about it at all, think that's what happened. But read the very next verse! **Verse 10**. There was a **REMNANT of that remnant** that still remained in Judah! **Jeremiah 40:11-15** mentions this remnant several times.

As God had promised, Jeremiah was given favor in the eyes of the conquerors, and the Babylonians gave him free choice to do as he liked, and gave him money to do it with (**Jeremiah 40:1-5**). So with the entire world at his disposal, Jeremiah chose to go to Mizpah (**verse 6**). Why? Keep reading.

At the time, there was strife among the few survivors (**verses 7-15**) and naïveté was a fatal disease for some (**Jeremiah 40:16-41:9**). But it's so easy to keep reading and miss the most important verse here! Read **verse 10** carefully. Whom did this Ishmael take with him to Mizpah? **The king's daughters!**

Nebuchadnezzar had slaughtered every male heir of Zedekiah **but he had not killed Zedekiah's daughters!** This means that **David's children in the royal line had continued to live in Judah!** The small remnant, after the defeat of Ishmael, traveled south in Judah towards Egypt and camped near Bethlehem (**Jeremiah 41:11-18**).

Then they asked Jeremiah's advice, swearing to do whatever God said (**Jeremiah 42:1-6**). God responded, and Jeremiah relayed the words to the people; basically, God said they should stay in the land, trust Him, and do ANYTHING BUT go to Egypt (**verses 7-22**). Naturally, the Jews did precisely the opposite of what God said and went down into Egypt *with the king's daughters* (**Jeremiah 43:1-7**).

Remember, God chooses His words carefully. He said in **Jeremiah 42:16-17** that NO *MEN* would escape if they went to Egypt. Jeremiah's life was clearly excepted (**Jeremiah 1:19**), as was Baruch, his scribe (**Jeremiah 45:1-5**), but EVERY OTHER MAN was to die in Egypt! *But not necessarily every woman!*

In Egypt, they naturally continued their sins and continued to ignore Jeremiah; God, in what sounds like an exasperated tone, berates them and says if they continue, even the women would have to die (**Jeremiah 44:1-7**), so He was going to kill every man just as He threatened earlier (**verses 8-14**). But did you notice that very last verse? Pay close attention! God was going to kill ALL Judah (**verse 11**). EVERYONE, from the least to the greatest, was going to DIE in Egypt!

But God made a very critical exception! They would all die **EXCEPT those that were supposed to ESCAPE!** (**Verse 14**). The people, having learned NOTHING after 40 years of watching Jeremiah's threats come to pass, told Jeremiah the problem wasn't their idolatry, but that they weren't worshipping the queen of heaven – Semiramis, Ishtar, the Catholic Mary – ENOUGH! (**Verses 15-19**).

So God responded, making special mention that this was addressed not only to the men but also to the *women* (**verses 20-28**), and saying again that all Judean men would be killed in Egypt; but said that a small remnant of Judah would escape Egypt and one day return to Judah! **But He didn't say WHEN!**

In **Jeremiah 46**, God prophesies of the destruction of Egypt by Babylon; but then shifts His prophecy to speak to someone else in **verse 19**. Who is that? A *daughter* dwelling *IN* Egypt. Not an Egyptian daughter! *She* is mentioned in **verse 24**. Not her, but a *Jewish king's daughter* who was AT THAT TIME dwelling *IN* Egypt!

He tells this young woman to “furnish thyself to go into captivity”. This is a bad translation; the YLT, much more trustworthy with literal words, translates it “Goods for removal make for thee”. In other words, God is telling this daughter dwelling in Egypt “pack your bags for a long trip”. Because the remnant of the remnant of Judah – the king's daughters – weren't to stay in Egypt! That remnant was going to a land “they knew not”! (**Jeremiah 15:14**).

She was the legal heir to the throne of David, the highest authority then existing in all the nations of Jacob; so in **verses 27-28** He speaks to her again under the name of Jacob/Israel. There are many layers of duality and much understanding in these verses, but for our purposes God is speaking to the king's daughters, specifically to the oldest one, telling her that she is about to travel to a far away land, **but that He will save her "from far away" (verse 27).**

But not in her lifetime! HER CHILDREN would be saved from that far away land! This wasn't to happen right away, but in the distant future when ALL JACOB'S CHILDREN – northern ten tribes AND the southern kingdom of Judah – would be gathered out of "all the nations where I have driven you" (Jeremiah 29:14).

THE FALL OF JUDAH

Now we need to rewind a bit and cover the details of the fall of Judah. After the death of the last good king of Judah, Josiah, his son Jehoahaz was made king in his place (**2 Chronicles 36:1-2**). He reigned all of three months until his brother Eliakim was made puppet king by the king of Egypt, who renamed him Jehoiakim, and then took Jehoahaz captive into Egypt (**verses 3-5**).

Jehoiakim reigned 11 years until the king of Babylon came and took him captive to Babylon, leaving his son Jehoiachin as the new king; he remained king for 100 days, then Nebuchadnezzar took him captive to Babylon as well, leaving Zedekiah his brother as king (**verses 6-10**).

Zedekiah was also evil and broke his oath before God to Nebuchadnezzar, which made God even more angry (**verses 11-13**), and so after many years of warning God gave up and destroyed the nation (**verses 14-20**), leaving only Jeremiah and the poor behind, *and the king's daughters*, and then they went down into Egypt against Jeremiah's explicit warning.

The alternate version which adds other details is **2 Kings 23:31-24:20**. Nebuchadnezzar did not take Jehoiakim and (three months later) Jehoiachin into captivity alone; he also took 10,000 of Judah's best and brightest along with them. Ezekiel was among these captives, and all dates in the book of Ezekiel are measured from the captivity of Jehoiachin, about 597 B.C.

You'll also notice that in the version in **2 Kings**, Jehoiachin was 18, not 8 years old; these words are quite similar in most languages, like English (eight-*een*), and are easily mistaken in transcription. The Bible is not without errors like this *but each error has Biblical evidence elsewhere clearly showing what the text SHOULD say*. In this case, when taken into captivity Jehoiachin's wives were mentioned; hardly likely, if he were only 8 years old.

This version also gives details of Zedekiah's blinding and death and the deaths of his sons (**2 Kings 25:1-7**), and the eventual kindness the Babylonian king showed to Jehoiachin in prison (**verses 27-30**). Note that due to Hebrew's linguistic quirks, Jehoiachin is also called Jeconiah and Coniah in the Bible.

To briefly recap, we know that the throne was taken from Jehoiachin when he went to Babylon, but the bloodline of David did continue through him to Zerubbabel (**Matthew 1:12-13**) and then on to Mary and Jesus. Zerubbabel was also the one who helped rebuild the temple after the captivity with Ezra and Nehemiah (**Ezra 3:8**).

But that was no longer the royal line; for Jehoiachin was the YOUNGER brother! He was 18 when he began to reign, reigned a little over 3 months, and then his brother Zedekiah began to reign – and Zedekiah was 21 years old at that time! That means that Zedekiah, not Jehoiachin, was the rightful heir

to the throne of David! Not only that, but God said that no child of Jehoiachin's would be king of Judah, or sit on the throne of David! (**Jeremiah 22:24-30**).

Thus not only were Jehoiachin's heirs barred from the throne of David, but by blood right of inheritance the daughters of Zedekiah were closer heirs to the throne of David than their uncles or cousins in Babylon (**Numbers 27:8-11**)! But this came with a condition – see **Numbers 36:5-9**. These daughters of Zedekiah HAD to marry within their own tribe. They HAD to marry a descendant of Judah, so that the inheritance of Judah would not pass to another tribe!

But ALL Jewish men (excepting the ones in Babylon, a thousand miles away) were prophesied to die in Egypt! Excepting Jeremiah and Baruch of course, and Jeremiah was specifically forbidden from marrying any of the “daughters of this land (Judah)” (**Jeremiah 16:2**). So somehow, these daughters, heirs to the throne of David, were to go somewhere far away and marry Jewish men.

The throne of David did not end with Zedekiah, but it WAS to be taken out of Judah and MOVED to a distant land that the Jews did not know. It traveled with the royal blood of Zedekiah's daughters under the chaperonage of the now-aged Jeremiah to Egypt, and then to a far distant land, there to meet and marry Jews who would continue the throne of David in that land.

In 600 BC, the known world was no longer a small place. They knew of lands as far as India and Ethiopia, and all around the Mediterranean sea. So all those places cannot be considered as candidates for the new location of the throne.

Remember also that they were to “take root downward, and bear fruit upward” – as explained above, that separate line of reasoning also proves they had to marry Jewish husbands in this far-away land.

THE HIGHEST BRANCH

Ezekiel was written in Babylon during the period following the captivity of Jehoiachin, and in **Ezekiel 17** he tells those Jews in Babylon a parable. This was a different group of Jews from those who remained in Judah and then went to Egypt. *This* group was to survive and return to Judah with Ezra and Nehemiah 70-130 years later.

But this prophecy was written to tell the Babylonian Jews what was going to happen to the Egyptian Jews, and to Egypt itself. Remember what you learned about prophecy in Lesson 10! Each of these parables and prophecies are telling the EXACT SAME STORY, with new pieces of information added and others taken away; only by adding them all up, finding the connections between them and assembling them, layer by layer, can you find the COMPLETE picture of what happened!

First, read the parable in **Ezekiel 17:1-10**. Think about it for awhile. Makes no sense at all, right? That's what God's parables are like. They're there to confuse the world, not to make things easier to understand! (**Matthew 13:10-17**). But if you read the CONTEXT, God EXPLAINS this parable in simple language so that we CAN understand it!

So read **Ezekiel 17:11-21**. Here God interprets this parable so that we need no help understanding it. The “great eagle” is a great king – the king of Babylon. The feathers, long wings, and many colors of the eagle most likely refer to his generals, his armies, and his empire of many different conquered races.

Comparing **verses 3-4** and **12**, we see that Lebanon symbolized Jerusalem. Lebanon was actually a different place quite a ways north of Jerusalem, but because the royal palace in Jerusalem was made out of cedars of Lebanon (**1 Kings 7:1-12**), God used the “cedar of Lebanon” to represent the royal family raised in that house.

The highest branch of that royal line is interpreted as the king of Judah, Jehoiachin. The young twigs of that cedar were “the princes” of the king, all of whom were carried off into Babylon, the “city of merchants”. Then comparing **verses 5-8** and **13-14**, we see that the Babylonian eagle “took of the seed of the land” – the royal seed, Zedekiah – and took an oath of loyalty from him, and gave him a kingdom that, if he had honored his oath, he would have kept.

This kingdom was not a tall cedar tree, but a low, spreading willow tree. Unimpressive, not powerful or mighty – but alive and healthy as long as it is watered well. And this willow put forth fruit and “shot forth sprigs” (**verse 6**). In keeping with this analogy, that can only mean that Zedekiah had children – as of course he did.

But Zedekiah broke his oath (**2 Chronicles 36:13**), and so this tree in **Ezekiel 17:7-9** and **15-21** sought an alliance with another eagle, this other great kingdom – Egypt – and wanted to be watered by IT instead of Babylon. “Will God let this sort of betrayal of an oath before God go unpunished?” Ezekiel asks – and then answers by prophesying the punishment of Zedekiah in Babylon.

But that isn’t the end of the parable! In that part, God explained all the key symbols for us; but in **verses 22-24** He tells a continuation of the parable with no interpretation that we must use the earlier keys to explain!

A TENDER TWIG

“The highest branch of the high cedar” – with the deposing of Jehoiachin, this was Zedekiah. “I will crop off from the *top* of his young twigs” – in any family tree, the highest branches are the youngest generation, and the TOP of those branches can only mean the youngest children. And God is going to cut, from among the youngest royal heirs, a *tender young twig*! Given the explanation of the parable we already understand, a tender young cedar twig can ONLY refer to a royal DAUGHTER!

This is a key to understanding most of this lesson, so let’s firmly establish it! A high branch is a king of the Davidic dynastic. A young twig, according to **verse 4**, is a *male* heir to the throne. A TENDER young twig can ONLY mean a *female* heir, especially since we know all male heirs were killed by Nebuchadnezzar AND that female heirs did survive and were carefully shepherded by Jeremiah!

But now look at what the future held for these young daughters of Zedekiah! He said “and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent”. We know a mountain is a kingdom in Biblical symbolism. We ALSO know that the final part of Jeremiah’s mission was “to build and to plant”! So these daughters were not inheriting a dead, unimportant throne! They were going to be planted in an active kingdom RULING!

But ruling over whom? **Verse 23**. They were to rule OVER ISRAEL! Not Judah! Besides, Judah was in Babylon *and has never been ruled over by a Jewish king since that day!* (Possibly, briefly, and arguably excepting the Maccabees, who were Levites, not of the children of David – and thus could not fulfill this prophecy.)

No, God promised these heirs of the throne of David that they would rule in an ISRAELITE kingdom! And that HE, through His servant Jeremiah, would PLANT these daughters, these tender young twigs, in that kingdom! And there, they would “*bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar*” – in other words, they would marry, have children, and be a powerful kingdom.

Ezekiel 31 makes it clear that the great nations of the Earth can be symbolized by various types of trees; in **verse 3** Assyria is called a cedar of Lebanon; there are clearly other cedars as well (**verse 8**). A cedar of Lebanon always symbolizes a mighty kingdom, usually a righteous one or at least one performing God’s services (**Isaiah 2:12-15, Isaiah 37:24, Psalms 92:12, Psalms 104:16, etc.**).

And under this cedar tree, this Davidic throne, “shall dwell fowl of every wing”. Based on the interpretations God gave us of eagles, wings, and feathers, and the way trees are portrayed sheltering things in **Ezekiel 31**, this can only mean all nations find shelter under this great dynasty. Compare this with what God said of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar (**Daniel 4:10-14, 20-22**).

Saying that all fowl of the Earth find shelter under the tree of the Davidic dynasty ruling over the nation of Israel is just another way of phrasing the prophecy God gave Abraham “*in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*” (**Genesis 22:18**). This is a physical fulfillment of a multi-layer prophecy, that the children of Abraham would be a great blessing to the world and that the world would find shelter and happiness in its shadow.

THE HIGH TREE AND LOW TREE

But continuing the prophecy of the scepter, God speaks in **Ezekiel 17:24** of a “high tree” that He has brought down, and a “low tree” that He has exalted. A green tree that has been dried up, and a dry tree that is now going to flourish.

Most Biblical scholars assume this refers to Zedekiah as the high and green tree, and Jehoiachin, languishing in Babylon, as the low and dry tree which was to be lifted up. Amusingly, some scholars believe the exact opposite, that the high tree was Jehoiachin who lost the kingdom to Zedekiah the low tree... who was also the green tree, and who in turn lost the kingdom to the dry tree – Jesus.

The first is completely contrary to the context, and the second is simply absurd. No, to understand what’s really going on here you have to look at the context. What is happening? The throne isn’t transferring from one king to another! The throne is MOVING to a new location, and the royal line of David is being carried BY A WOMAN.

Think about that for a minute! A direct male line of descent has held the birthright promised to Judah for almost a thousand years! But now the *male* line of descent is broken! Descendants of David *will* sit on the throne without fail until the return of Christ according to God’s unbreakable word, **but David’s children must do so through a FEMALE heir!**

Whomever the daughters of Zedekiah marry will rule over *them, even when they rule over others!* That means David’s lineage will have a role, but only *a subservient role*, in the birthright from then on! But remember, we aren’t *only* speaking of David’s birthright!

David was given his own unique blessings and promises from God, but David was ALSO the inheritor of a much earlier birthright, the birthright of Judah which he received from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

David was the inheritor of Judah's birthright – but remember, David *shouldn't have been!* David's ancestor Pharez **STOLE** that birthright, and David only held it because of that. Because of David's righteousness, David received his OWN individual blessings; *those* could never be taken from him.

But the blessings of the throne of *Judah COULD be taken from David!* Judah's blessing was “*the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come*” (**Genesis 49:10**). That blessing which Pharez stole from Zerah through a dishonorable “breach” **MUST** be taken back from Pharez's line (thus, David's line) and restored to his wronged twin Zerah.

So the “high tree” who got there by shoving his brother aside and forcing his way out of the womb was *Pharez!* The “low tree” was the brother who *deserved* the scepter of Judah but received nothing but an implicit promise that one day his brother would pay for the breach!

And with the destruction of Jerusalem the time had come for the breach to be healed. As you learned earlier, there was only one possible way for this to happen: **a female heir of David had to marry a male heir of Zerah!** And, in repairing the breach, raise up the “foundations of many generations” (**Isaiah 58:12**).

Then Zerah would again be first in Israel; one of David's heirs could remain king forever; and a lawgiver could continue ruling Israel in direct male descent from between Judah's feet until Jesus returns! And in this way, these daughters of Zedekiah could “take root downward” – by tying their line back into the rightful birthright tribe of Judah and marrying a descendant of Zerah, their roots would tie in with the roots of the birthright and then together Pharez and Zerah could “bear fruit upward”!

LETTERS TO ZERAH

With this in mind, let's revisit **Psalms 89**. I know we studied this already, but it's worth going through again – this is vitally important. You must have absolute proof that Pharez's/David's female heir did in fact marry Zerah's male heir.

In **Psalms 89:20-29** David tells Ethan of God's promises to him, then tells what will happen to David's children if (when) they forsake God in **verses 30-37**. Then in **verses 38-39**, God “cast his (David's) throne to the ground”, and *APPARENTLY broke His covenant with him!*

This is describing the period of Jeremiah's lifetime; when David's throne was indeed cast down because the green tree **MUST** be made dry so that the dry tree could sprout! And then, and ever since, all those who read the Bible dismiss and reproach David's throne, saying that it died with Zedekiah's sons!

What does the world think of God's promises to David, Judah and Israel? **Jeremiah 33:20-26**. God has not broken His covenant; indeed, He kept **EVERY** covenant, the one with David, Judah, Zerah, Shem, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – and done so in the only way possible.

I may have been repetitive about these things, but knowing for an absolute fact that Zedekiah's daughters continued David's throne by marrying a son of Zerah in a far-off land, *and is there ruling over tribes of Israel TO THIS VERY DAY*, is an absolutely essential key to understanding **ANY** major prophecy in the Bible.

And the entire Christian world completely – and I mean **COMPLETELY** – rejects and ignores this simple Biblical fact. **These things HAD to happen. It doesn't matter how they did;** it doesn't matter

what “accepted” history says; if you believe God at all, God has said in the strongest language possible these things MUST happen, just as the sun must rise each day. If you take that as the starting point, it’s all easy to understand.

JUDAH OVER ISRAEL

In **Genesis 49:8-10**, God, through Jacob, prophesied of the passing of the blessing to Judah and his descendants. In those verses, God says “*thy father’s children shall bow down before thee*”, and equates Judah with a Lion (see also **Revelation 5:5**), and promises that Judah shall always rule until Christ returns the second time.

But earlier, we passed lightly over the last half of God’s promise to Judah in **Genesis 49:10** that “*unto him [Judah] shall the gathering of the people be*”. Note that: The GATHERING of the people would be TO Judah. Thus, where Judah went *the rest of Israel would gather around*.

Back to the daughters of Zedekiah and the sons of Zerah, this means that where they were, **the rest of Israel would follow and gather around them**. Otherwise, how could they rule the tribes of Israel? The throne of David was the place that rallied the rest of the tribes of Israel together.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Jeremiah is called a prophet throughout the Bible, but Jeremiah was a spiritual leader and sent by God with a certain mission; as you learned in the lessons on government, that makes him an apostle. The Bible never calls him one, because this portion of the Bible was written in Hebrew, and *apostle* is a Greek word.

But that explains why in **Jeremiah 1:10**, he was given authority over *nations*; for he was to be instrumental in installing a Jewish dynasty over the tribes – nations – of Israel, which were at that time scattered across Europe and central Asia.

Now let’s systematically look at what his mission was and how it was fulfilled; when God said that Jeremiah was given this authority to “root out”; what exactly did that mean? The same Hebrew word is more often translated “pluck up” in the KJV; so what specifically was God going to use Jeremiah to “pluck up” or “root out”? **Jeremiah 12:17, 18:7**. So plucking up a kingdom literally means removing a nation from its home. What is the opposite of rooting out? **Jeremiah 24:6**. So planting means to give them – at least, some of them – a new home.

What about his mission to “pull down”? **Jeremiah 4:26, 33:4, 39:8**. So this mission specifically refers to tearing down cities, houses, walls, etc. – in other words, man-made structures. What is the opposite? **Jeremiah 24:6**. So building means to build new cities. Pulling down means the destruction of old cities.

The word translated “destroy” in the KJV is more often translated “perish”. What does this part of the mission mean? **Jeremiah 6:21, 15:7, 27:10, 15**. So basically, this means God was going to have many of them killed.

The final word is “to throw down”; this is better translated “to break through”, in the sense that you break through a wall, or penetrate a line of troops and scatter the survivors. See **Isaiah 22:19**. It is difficult to prove, but in the context of **Jeremiah 1:10**, and with what we know of Jeremiah’s mission

and the fate of the Jews in that day, this word must mean Jeremiah's mission was "to scatter" the Jews – which is precisely what happened.

With these translations in mind, Jeremiah's mission was "to pull Judah and the throne of David up by the roots; to destroy the cities of Judah; to watch many of them die by the hands of their enemies; to scatter the remnant; then to partially reverse the damage by planting the remnant of Judah – the king's daughters – in a new land, and building new cities there with a new dynasty of Zerah/David ruling over them on David's throne".

There is considerable secular history showing how and when this happened; but that is not our topic today. And while that history would be useful, it is not really necessary for our purposes; we can prove our point without leaving the Bible at all. So we will ignore history for now.

The point is, somewhere, somehow, around 550 BC, Jeremiah and Baruch took the daughters of Zedekiah from Egypt to a far away land, somewhere beyond the Mediterranean Sea (for all the countries on the Mediterranean were known to the Jews); there they found a colony of Jews who had been separated from the main group in Judah for some time.

There a son of Ethan the Zarhite married the eldest daughter of Zedekiah, and together they ruled Judah; and as the tribes of Israel migrated away from the Assyrian captivity, they gathered near the throne of David and assembled themselves as nations under the rule of the descendants of the royal couple.

Why doesn't the world already know this, if it is true? Many reasons. First, because the nations themselves often didn't know it. They were guided by God who watched over them as He promised, so that when the house of Israel was sifted among all nations, "*yet not the least grain fall upon the earth*" (**Amos 9:9**).

Second, as I said, there IS massive historical evidence. But it is dismissed as myth and legend because it proves the Bible, not the apes-out-of-Africa belief that shapes anthropology today.

And thirdly, and most sad of all, because much work has been done by well-intentioned people bent on proving the Bible true **whether they could prove it or not**. Most of the scholarship on this subject, even if their conclusions were right, is of mediocre quality, full of poor scholarship, assumptions, hearsay and outright fraud. This gives the topic a bad name among historians even when real proof does exist.

But that said, we have traced the scepter as far through history as the Bible alone will take us; that is, until we can find those who gathered around them, the nations of Israel. Find them, find the scepter; find the scepter, find the birthright.

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold**; "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

The Bible tells us to PROVE ALL THINGS, and The Simple Answers encourages people to do just that. If you cannot PROVE what you believe, you have no right to believe it! Many of the things we print are shocking because they are different from what you've heard, but if something we say offends or upsets you, we hope you will take the time to set aside your preconceived ideas and PROVE your point from the Bible to see if you truly have been right all these years.

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Nathaniel Burson
10758 Hwy 155 South
Big Sandy, TX 75755

Questions@TheSimpleAnswers.com

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