

Out of Egypt and On to Babylon
From Slavery Back to Slavery

By R. Nelson Nash

History seems to prove that mankind refuses to learn as much as it can from extremely valuable experiences. I can think of no better place to prove my point than looking at the Bible. Mankind has an eternal problem – we want to be God (in the pagan sense of the word). To witness the ultimate manifestation of this malady, watch what we try to do with our government. Let's begin by going back several thousand years in the book of Genesis and start with:

GOD'S CONTRACT WITH JACOB (ISRAEL)

"I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Gen. 28: 13–15)

Jacob had a twin brother, Esau. In that day in time the firstborn received the birthright from the father. Esau was the older one. Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, through some trickery, managed to secure the birthright of the firstborn from his father, Isaac. Jacob was the favorite son of Rebekah. Esau was the favorite of Isaac. Naturally, this embittered Esau towards his brother, Jacob. Rebekah tells Jacob, *"Your brother Esau is consoling himself with the thought of killing you. Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran."* (Gen. 27 42b–43)

And so, Jacob went to work for his Uncle Laban, who turned out to be a bigger trickster than Jacob and his mother! Laban had two daughters, Leah

and Rachel. Jacob told Laban he would work for him for seven years in exchange for his daughter, Rachel. Laban tricked him by giving him his oldest daughter, Leah. Then he said, "Work for me seven more years and I will give you Rachel." Laban really knew how to create a good deal for himself.

But, don't feel sorry for Jacob. He found a way to "get even" with Laban a few years later. Go and search it out for yourself - see Genesis 30: 25–43. Apparently Jacob learned very well from Laban the art of deception!

Jacob had four sons by Leah – by her maid servant, and – by Rachel's maid servant for a total of ten sons. He finally gets to marry Rachel and she produces two sons - Joseph and Benjamin - they are Jacob's favorites, naturally creating all the makings of a dysfunctional family. Joseph could easily be classified by his ten older brothers as "a spoiled brat." Joseph was also "a dreamer" - and this characteristic comes in handy later in his life.

Somewhere along the timeline, Jacob's name was changed to Israel.

A situation presents itself that the ten brothers can get Joseph out of their lives - and nothing could be better - by selling him to a caravan of tradesmen on their way to Egypt.

JOSEPH IS SOLD INTO SLAVERY

There, Joseph is sold into slavery. Another sequence of events places him in prison. We won't go into the details of this event. Again - search this one out for yourself, too. It is interesting reading. (Genesis 39)

Joseph was a model prisoner and worked himself up to becoming a "trustee." (Here we enter the concept of government. Pharaoh was government). Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and his chief baker were thrown into prison as a result of offending the king and were assigned to Joseph

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for custody. Both the cupbearer and the baker had a dream and Joseph correctly interprets them - the cupbearer will be restored to his position in three days! Joseph instructs him, "But when all goes well with you, remember me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison, for I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."

The king's baker didn't fare too well. Interpreting his dream, Joseph said, "Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat away your flesh." And so it came to be.

Unfortunately, the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph - he forgot him! Imagine that!

Two years later Pharaoh has a dream but none of his servants can interpret it. Finally, his cupbearer remembers the abilities of Joseph and recommends him to Pharaoh.

Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream.

"Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten and the famine will ravage the land." (Gen. 41: 29 & 30)

Because of this unique ability Joseph becomes second in command in all of Egypt, a rather rapid rise to power from such a lowly estate of being a prisoner!

During the "seven years of plenty" Pharaoh confiscated 20% of all the produce of the land. (Gen. 41: 34-36). There is no evidence that he paid for it.

During the "seven years of famine" he sold back to them, that which he had stolen! (Gen. 41: 56). So much for a government program! We tend today to think this kind of chicanery is a modern

phenomenon - but, you see, it has deep roots going back thousands of years.

The famine was widespread and Israel, back in Caanan, learned that there was grain in Egypt. So, he sent his ten eldest sons to buy grain. This resulted in a face off with Joseph, the one they had sold into slavery! (Gen. 42) Of course, they didn't recognize him. They thought he was probably a slave somewhere - or, maybe even dead. Joseph put them through a rather tough inquisition, but, eventually reconciliation was achieved.

(Gen. 45: 20) *"When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased."* Pharaoh said to Joseph, *"Tell your brothers, do this, load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land"* (Gen. 45: 16-18) *"Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours."*

To my knowledge, this was among the first records of a government handout! It is evident to me that, if you ever start taking that sort of stuff - you will end up being a slave!! It does something to one's mind and makes one dependent on the grantor. There is a very strong element of dependency in the act of worship. You will end up worshiping that on which you are dependent. And, that's what government people want you to do - be dependent on them. They want to be objects of worship. They want you to think that your blessings in life come from them - not from God!

My personal observation down through the years has been - whenever there is a government handout of any kind, normally intelligent people,

will abandon their productive efforts, go stand in line for their share of the dole - and watch each other starve to death!! This point is the central theme of this paper and it will be reemphasized as the story progresses.

And, now comes the hard part - the famine was severe throughout the whole region. *“Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in Egypt and Canaan in payment for the grain they were buying, and he brought it to Pharaoh’s palace.”* (Gen. 47: 14)

Eventually, they ran out of money. Then they mortgaged their cattle. When they ran out of cattle, they mortgaged themselves. They became slaves for 430 years. In that many years you can really become good at slavery! You can’t think past that situation.

So, after a lengthy time Joseph dies and, *“Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.”* (Exodus 1:9) Things got much worse for the Israelite nation.

Nothing in all the Scriptures indicates that God intended for His chosen people to end up in Egypt as slaves forever. To me, it seems that He let this experience happen to teach them that they should be dependent on Him - not government of any kind! Don’t ever sell your souls to government, or you will end up in slavery.

MOSES

Finally God produces Moses, a leader who will take them out of the slavery of Egypt. God creates a situation in which Moses is reared in Pharaoh’s household and consequently receives the best education possible at that time.

Sometime later Moses witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And, of course, there were a couple of Egyptians who did see Moses’ murder. Pharaoh heard of this and

tried to kill Moses -- but Moses escaped and went to live in Midian. While there, he married.

It was during this time that Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, near Mount Horeb. This is where he witnessed a strange sight -- a bush was on fire, but it did not burn up! God spoke to him through the burning bush and directed him to go back to Pharaoh and bring His people out of Egypt.

God tells Moses, *“And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians.”* (Exodus 3:21-22) In this manner God provided all the basic tools of a monetary system.

This was by no means an easy task. Pharaoh gave them all sorts of grief while God sent plague after plague to encourage him to “let my people go.” This all took place over a lengthy period. The final plague that did the trick was the one that killed the first born of every Egyptian family -- including Pharaoh’s son. *During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the Lord as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go! And also bless me.”* Exodus (12: 31 -32)

THE EXODUS

As the Israelites were leaving and approaching the Red Sea, Pharaoh had a change of heart -- “what have I done? I have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!” So, they mount up their chariots and horses and pursue Moses and his followers. As Pharaoh and his troops approached them, the Israelites were terrified. Their backs were to the Red Sea and Pharaoh’s Army

was closing in!

God says to Moses:

“Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.” (Exodus 14: 15-18)

And so, Pharaoh and his army were drowned right before their eyes!! Whew! What a narrow escape! What a miracle! Just how many miracles had the Israelites witnessed?

Now they are free of Egypt! Free at last! Free at last! And, where had God put them?

Sinai! There was nothing there to sustain life. Nothing! This is where God put them for the next 40 years to teach them to be dependent on Him. It would be impossible for them to claim sustenance from any other source. Their minds had to be cleansed from the idea of being a slave. They had to learn to be free people, indeed, and put their trust in God -- not government. No government programs!! Remember, there is a very strong element of dependency in the act of worship -- you will worship that on which you are dependent. All governments want you to be dependent on them -- not God!

GOD PROVIDES

Right away He provided them with the greatest document of human liberty that has ever been -- The Ten Commandments. Exodus, chapter 20 details the commandments and for the next four chapters there are more explanations that would

help them to understand further meaning of them. This lengthy explanation was apparently necessary to cleanse their minds from the paradigm of being a slave. You have to learn to think differently.

In Exodus, chapter 25, Moses goes up Mt. Sinai to meet with God and receive the tablets on which the Commandments are inscribed. He is up there for 40 days and nights.

The Israelite Nation had been grumbling and complaining ever since they realized they were in a place where they were totally dependent on God. Six weeks after crossing the Red Sea on dry land the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. *The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”* (Exodus 16: 2 &3).

Now that Moses had been gone for a lengthy period, they were really angry. When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, *“Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”* (Exodus 32: 1).

Aaron responded, *“Take off the gold earrings that your wives, yours sons and your daughters are wearing and bring them to me.”* (Remember the Golden Rule --- Those who have the gold make the rules!). Aaron took what they gave him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. The next day they had a big party! *“We are saved! We are going back to Egypt -- hallelujah!”*

And, now, Moses comes down from the mountain and saw the calf and the dancing. His anger burned and he threw the tablets (inscribed Ten

Commandments) out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

God instructed Moses to “utterly destroy” those who had instigated this event. Three thousand were killed that day. (Exodus 32: 27 & 28) Moses goes up the mountain again and receives a second set of tablets with the Ten Commandments inscribed on them. In Exodus 34: 14, God reiterates the major point of the commandments, “Do not worship any other god, for the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

In spite of the miracles that God showed them throughout their journey, they complained continually and longed to “be back in Egypt” in slavery. In Numbers 11 beginning at verse 4 we read, “*The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, ‘If only we had some meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost – also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!’* At this point God became so exasperated with them that He put them on an Atkins Diet!! In verse 18 God says, “*Tell the people: consecrate your selves in preparation for tomorrow, when you will eat meat. The Lord heard you when you wailed, ‘If only we had meat to eat! We were better off in Egypt!’ Now the Lord will give you meat, and you will eat it. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days or five, ten or twenty day, but for a whole month – until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it – because you have rejected the Lord, who is among you, and have wailed before Him, saying ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt?’*”

Time and again, the Israelites complained so much that God was ready to do away with them all -- except a remnant that remained loyal to Him -- and start all over. Moses pled with God to spare them. However, a large number did perish from time to time.

FORTY YEARS OF EDUCATION

And so, they wandered in this wilderness for forty years, learning how to be dependent on God for sustenance. Their clothing did not wear out -- their sandals did not wear out – He fed them, but, on occasion He tested them with a water problem. In Numbers 20: 2 – 5. *Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. They quarreled with Moses and said, “If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord! Why did you bring the Lord’s community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink.”*

In response, (Numbers 20: 6 – 11), *Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell face-down, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. The Lord said to Moses, “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.” So Moses took the staff from the Lord’s presence, just as he commanded him, but Moses was pretty “ticked off” at them. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and community and their livestock drank.*

This action on the part of Moses gives them the appearance that it was Moses’ power and the use

of force that solved their need for water – not the word of God. That was a big mistake on the part of Moses. As a result, he was not allowed to go into the promised land. He was allowed to view it from a distance, but that was all.

(Numbers 20:12) *But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.”*

After wandering in the wilderness for some forty years, they finally came to the promised land. Moses is speaking in (Deuteronomy 1:20) *Then I said to you, “You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. See, the Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the Lord, the God of your fathers, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”*

Whereupon -- of all things -- they had a committee meeting!!

In verse 22, then all of you came to me and said, “let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to.” The idea seemed good to me; so I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe. They left and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol and explored it. Taking with them some of the fruit of the land, they brought it down to us and reported, “It is a good land that the Lord our God is giving us.”

But, you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God. They say, “The people are stronger and taller than we are;

the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there.” Caleb & Joshua were among the 12 spies and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” But, they got out-voted, ten to two, by the other spies who told all the people, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

THE GRADUATE COURSE – BACK TO THE WILDERNESS!

As a result of this rebellion God gave them “the graduate course” in learning to be dependent on Him -- they are back to more years of wandering in the wilderness! Except for Joshua and Caleb, all the adults who came out of Egypt perished during this time. Only their children finally made it to the Promised Land.

Before going in, God gave them a large number of briefings on what they were expected to do and reassurances that he would be with them -- as long as they kept their end of the covenant.

So, after the forty years had passed they finally are ready to go into the land that God had promised them. Moses is speaking. *Then I said to you, “Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, and in the desert. There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.”* (Deuteronomy 1: 29 - 31)

(Numbers 33: 50 – 53). *On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho the Lord said to Moses: Speak*

to the Israelites and say to them; ‘When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess. (v.55 - 56) “But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live and then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.”

Moses gives further instructions to them in Deuteronomy 7 --

“and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire.”

REMEMBER THE SOURCE OF BLESSINGS

(Deut. 8) Moses continues.

“When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord our God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget Him, failing to observe his commands, his laws, and

his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (v. 17) You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.”

This is a classical example of “the arrival syndrome.” I can’t think of anything more detrimental to people than this!

Moses further explains to them in Deut. 9: 4 – 6:

After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what we swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

Did they carry out God’s instructions?

Absolutely not! (Judges 1:27 – 33)

But Manasseh did not drive out the people of Beth Shan or Taanach or Dor or Ibleam or Megiddo and their surrounding settlements, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that land. When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely. Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them. Neither did Zebulun drive out the Canaanites living in Kitron or Nahalol, who remained among them; but they did subject them to forced labor. Nor did Asher drive out those living in Acco or Sidon or Ahlab or Aczib or Helbah or Aphek or Rehob, and because of this the people of Asher lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land. Neither did Naphtali drive out those living in Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath; but the Naphtalites too lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, and those living in Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath became forced laborers for them.

There are more examples cited, but you get the picture. Instead of driving them out, they made slaves of them. Since they were slaves in Egypt, did they think “this is the way to live?” All the adults who left Egypt perished in the wilderness wandering. Maybe this is just the nature of man -- enslave others to benefit my own desires.

JUDGES – BUT, NO GOVERNMENT

And so, for a lengthy period they lived under a system of Judges -- there was no government! Under such freedom a nation cannot help but prosper! And, when you prosper, you can count on it -- others will do their best to steal from you.

(1 Samuel 8: 5.) *They said to Samuel, “You are old, and our sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.” But, when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him. “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.”*

(1 Samuel 8: 10 – 18). *Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king. He said, “This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves*

will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

And so, Samuel told them in no uncertain terms what a king would do to them.

(1 Samuel 8: 19) But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said, “We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

(1 Samuel 8: 21-22). When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. The Lord answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”

AT LAST, THEY HAVE A KING!
(GOVERNMENT)

(1 Samuel 10:20b) Finally, Saul, son of Kish was chosen.

(v. 23-24) Then they ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people!” Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

Saul was a very successful soldier - big, strong, handsome - all the leadership qualities to be a king. And, he was a good man - very humble and surprised that he was to become king. To be anointed king was the ultimate experience one could have.

However, when one is placed in such a position, it is pretty easy to get off track. He began to think he was in charge. Samuel had warned of this probability, but no one listened. Saul was

visible, and God was not. Saul overstepped his authority and thus sealed his fate. Man has one eternal problem – he wants to be God. To see the ultimate manifestation of this malady, watch what man tries to do with government. Power corrupts - and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Soon it became evident to the Israelites that they had made a big mistake!

(1 Samuel 12:19) The people all said to Samuel, “Pray to the Lord your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.”

(1 Samuel 15:10) Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: “I am grieved that I have made Saul King, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.”

His successor was David, a man after God’s own heart. Down through the ages, he was recognized as the greatest king of all time. But, David goofed up in a big way - his involvement with Bathsheba. David tried to “worm his way out of the situation” but Nathan the prophet brought him face to face with the error of his ways. Do you realize what a brave man Nathan was? He could easily have had his head cut off for his action. (Sometimes I wonder - where is Nathan today? We need Nathan badly!) Unlike Saul, though, David repented.

But, no matter how “good” a person may be, he will still reap the consequences of that kind of action. It can manifest itself in any number of ways. In this case, one of the results was a totally dysfunctional family.

First, his son Amnon, raped his half-sister, Tamar. Her brother by the same mother was Absalom. A couple of years later, Absalom found a way to kill Amnon because of what he had done to Tamar. Then he fled to another kingdom and stayed there

three years. Finally King David was persuaded to let Absalom return to Jerusalem.

(2 Samuel 14:24) But the king said, "He must go to his own house; he must not see my face."

(2 Samuel 14:25) In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.

(v.28) Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face.

Finally the two were reconciled and they met.

(2 Samuel 15:1-6) In the course of time Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "Look your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you." And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he gets justice."

Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

So, you see, politicians have had a superior model to sway the hearts of men since ancient days. If Absalom were alive in America today, he would be elected President in a heartbeat! Continuing this kind of action for several years, Absalom decided that he was to become king in place of his father, David, and set out to kill him. Nice guy, huh? This all ended in tragedy and the death of Absalom. King David was devastated in the loss of his errant son.

Continuing the saga, in 1 Kings 1:5:

Now, Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, "I will be king." So he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. (His father had never interfered with him by asking, "Why do you behave as you do?" He was also very handsome and was born next after Absalom.)

Adonijah proceeded to have parties and surrounded himself with dignitaries of his own choosing.

SOLOMON – WISEST MAN OF ALL TIME

This was not to be, however, and David's choice for his successor was Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheeba. Needless to say, Adonijah ended up losing his life in this intrigue. In fact, there was a lot of killing that took place during all this scene of David's household.

Solomon started his reign with the best of intentions. In 1 Kings 3:7-10 he says:

"Now O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to

govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

(v. 11&12) So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be."

Solomon was the wisest man of all time. But, if the wisest man of all time could mess up as badly as he did, what hope do you and I have without God? How could Solomon be stupid enough to have 700 wives and 300 concubines? Just think of how many mothers-in-law goes with a situation like that! Also, many of those marriages were the result of alliances with other nations. History clearly shows the tragic results of such a course of action. At the very beginning of his reign Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh King of Egypt and married his daughter.

As a side note, remember in the early years of our own country, George Washington, in his farewell address, warned against any entangling alliances with foreign nations. So did Jefferson and Madison. We seem to have forgotten their warnings and we are reaping the consequences now.

Then Solomon proceeds to build this huge temple. *"The temple that King Solomon built for the Lord was sixty cubits long, twenty wide and thirty high."* (1 Kings 6:2). According to my Bible, that would be 90 feet long, 30 feet wide and 45 feet high. (1 Kings 6:37 b) - Solomon spent seven years building the temple.

For a complete account of what went into the

Temple and Solomon's palace I urge you to read 1 Kings chapter 6 and 7.

Next, he builds his own palace.

(1 Kings 7:1) *"It took Solomon thirteen years however to complete the construction of his palace." It was a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high... (150 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high).* Note the comparison of the relative size and time that it took to build the two structures. Can you imagine the taxation required to build all this? I wonder why his palace was so much larger.

Additionally, it was all done with slave labor. In 1 Kings 9:15 we read:

Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the Lord's Temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer." In verse 20–23, "All the people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites), that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites could not exterminate - these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day. But, Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers. They were also the chief officials in charge of Solomon's projects - 550 officials supervising the men who did the work.

Bureaucracy never changes either, does it?

In addition to all this extravagance I suggest that you read 1 Kings 11 for a more complete description of the wealth he accumulated.

(1 Kings 9:1-9) *When Solomon had finished building the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had to do, the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. The Lord said to him: "I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.*

"As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will scoff and say, 'Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?'

People will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them - this is why the Lord brought all this disaster on them.'

But, in 1 Kings 11:1-6 we read:

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter - Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord: he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

And in v. 9-13:

The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command. So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake

of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”

And so, Solomon sealed his fate. After his death his son, Rehoboam, became king.

In 1 Kings 12:3-11.

...and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: “Your father put a heavy yoke (taxes) on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.” Rehoboam answered, “Go away for three days and then come back to me.” So the people went away. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. “How would you advise me to answer these people?” he asked. They replied, “If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.”

But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. He asked them, “What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me ‘Lighten the yoke [reduce taxes] your father put on us’?”

TAXES, TAXES, TAXES!

1 Kings 12:10-11 The young men who had grown up with him replied, “Tell these people ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist. My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.’”

So, this was the course of action by Rehoboam -- even heavier taxation. Guess what? This

results in the division of the kingdom. Ten tribes become the Northern Kingdom under the rule of Jereboam, who was one of Solomon’s officials many years prior -- thus fulfilling the promise God made earlier. Onerous taxation has been a primary factor in division of nations all throughout history. I’m sure it was so in this case, too.

In 1776 thirteen independent colonies seceded from the mother country, England, and went to war for ten years on account of outrageous taxation. It was two percent in the South and one percent in the North!

In 1 Kings 12: 16–19 When all Israel saw that the king (Rehoboam) refused to listen to them (because of the outrageous taxation), they answered the king: “What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse’s son? To your tents, O Israel! Look after your own house, O David!” So the Israelites went home. But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them. King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, who was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

King Jeroboam had problems with his thought processes almost immediately. Because of his fear that the kingdom would be reunited, he took measures to lead the Northern Kingdom to worshipping idols.

In 1 Kings 14: 7-10 Go, tell Jeroboam that this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I raised you up from among the people and made you a leader over my people Israel. I tore

the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, but you have not been like my servant, David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes. You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back. Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel -- slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone.'

So, Jeroboam's kingdom only lasted 22 years. Judah, under King Rehoboam was no better -- they did evil in the sight of the Lord -- and his kingdom only lasted 17 years.

There was continual warfare between the two kingdoms during their reigns.

Thereafter, there was a succession of kings and a continuous downward spiral of evil. Every once in a while there was a good guy, like Hezekiah and Josiah, but, generally speaking it was not a very pretty picture that followed for many years. All the things that Samuel had warned them about when they asked for a king had now taken place. But, search the scriptures diligently and you will find no place where they lamented asking for a king except the occasion just after King Saul when they recognized their mistake.

BACK IN SLAVERY

As a result of all the sins of the Northern Kingdom they were first to be taken into exile by a foreign nation. In 2 Kings 17: 5 & 6 we read:

The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid

siege to it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria.

A number of years later Judah fell to the same fate as a result of their sins. They were taken to Babylon and their city of Jerusalem and the temple was reduced to rubble. Now they were all back in the slavery they had experienced in Egypt. They had rejected their dependence on God and had adopted the ways of all the other nations.

All of this explanation has been to bring the story to the book of Ezekiel. The Southern Kingdom is in exile and in Chapter 23 Ezekiel is revealing to them the message from God telling them how they came to this fate. When one ends up in an awful mess, one needs to understand "how you got here."

GOD'S MESSAGE TO EZEKIEL

Following is the entire chapter [23]:

*The word of the Lord came to me:
"Son of man, there were two women, daughters of the same mother. They became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth. In that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed. The older was named Oholah and her sister was Oholibah. They were mine and gave birth to sons and daughters. Oholah is Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem. Oholah engaged in prostitution while she was still mine; and she lusted after her lovers, the Assyrians -- warriors clothed in blue, governors and commanders, all of them handsome young men, and mounted horsemen. She gave herself as a prostitute to all the elite of the Assyrians and defiled herself with all the idols of everyone*

she lusted after. She did not give up the prostitution she began in Egypt, when during her youth men slept with her, caressed her virgin bosom and poured out their lust upon her.

Therefore I handed her over to her lovers, the Assyrians, for whom she lusted. They stripped her naked, took away her sons and daughters and killed her with the sword. She became a byword among women, and punishment was inflicted on her.

Her sister Oholibah saw this, yet in her lust and prostitution she was more depraved than her sister. She too lusted after the Assyrians -- governors and commanders, warriors in full dress, mounted horsemen, all handsome young men. I saw that she too defiled herself; both of them went the same way.

But she carried her prostitution still further. She saw men portrayed on a wall, figures of Chaldeans portrayed in red, with belts around their waists and flowing turbans on their heads; all of them looked like Babylonian chariot officers, natives of Chaldea. As soon as she saw them, she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. Then the Babylonians came to her, to the bed of love, and in their lust they defiled her. After she had been defiled by them, she turned away from them in disgust.

When she carried on her prostitution openly and exposed her nakedness, I turned away from her in disgust, just as I had turned away from her sister. Yet she became more and more promiscuous as recalled the days of her youth, when she was a prostitute

in Egypt. There she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses. So you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when in Egypt your bosom was caressed and your young breasts fondled.

Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Sovereign Lord says; I will stir up your lovers against you, those you turned away from in disgust, and I will bring them against you from every side -- the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, the men of Pekod and Shoa and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them, handsome young men, all of them governors and commanders, chariot officers and men of high rank, all mounted on horses. They will come against you with weapons, chariots and wagons and with a throng of people; they will take up positions against you on every side with large and small shields and with helmets. I will turn you over to them for punishment, and they will punish you according to their standards.

I will direct my jealous anger against you, and they will deal with you in fury. They will cut off your noses and your ears, and those of you who are left will fall by the sword. They will take away your sons and daughters, and those of you who are left will be consumed by fire. They will also strip you of your clothes and take your fine jewelry. So I will put a stop to the lewdness and prostitution you began in Egypt. You will not look on these things with longing or remember Egypt anymore.

For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am about to hand you over to

those you hate, to those you turned away from in disgust. They will deal with you in hatred and take away everything you have worked for. They will leave you naked and bare, and the shame of your prostitution will be exposed. Your lewdness and promiscuity have brought this upon you, because you lusted after the nations and defiled yourself with their idols. You have gone the way of your sister; so I will put her cup into your hand.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says; You will drink your sister's cup, a cup large and deep; it will bring scorn and derision, for it holds so much. You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, the cup of ruin and desolation, the cup of your sister Samaria. You will drink it and drain it dry; you will dash it to pieces and tear your breasts. I have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord.

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says; Since you have forgotten me and thrust me behind your back, you must bear the consequences of your lewdness and prostitution.

The Lord said to me; "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then confront them with their detestable practices, for they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their idols; they even sacrifice their children, whom they bore to me, as food for them. They have also done this to me: At that same time they defiled my sanctuary and desecrated my Sabbaths. On the very day they sacrificed their children to their idols, they entered my sanctuary and desecrated it. That is what they did

in my house.

They even sent messengers for men who came from far away, and when they arrived you bathed yourself for them, painted your eyes and put on your jewelry. You sat on an elegant couch, with a table spread before it on which you had placed the incense and oil that belonged to me.

The noise of a carefree crowd was around her; Sabeans were brought from the desert along with men from the rabble, and they put bracelets on the arms of the woman and her sister and beautiful crowns on their heads. Then I said about the one worn out by adultery, 'Now let them use her as a prostitute, for that is all she is.' And they slept with her. As men sleep with a prostitute, so they slept with those lewd women, Oholah and Oholibah. But righteous men will sentence them to punishment of women who commit adultery and shed blood, because they are adulterous and blood is on their hands.

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Bring a mob against them and give them over to terror and plunder. The mob will stone them and cut them down with their swords; they will kill their sons and daughters and burn down their houses. So I will put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women may take warning and not imitate you. You will suffer the penalty for your lewdness and bear the consequences of your sins of idolatry. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign God."

So, out of the slavery of Egypt -- and back to slavery in Babylon. They put their dependence

on earthly kings instead of God.

CONCLUSION

When the Israelite nation left Egypt, God explained right away that he was their King. They did not need an earthly king. They were to put their dependence in Him, not earthly leaders. Mankind's eternal problem is that he wants to be god. To observe the ultimate manifestation of the malady, watch what he tries to do with his government.

God further explained that he was a Jealous God -- He won't put up with that nonsense! As a result, mankind is always destined to fail in such attempts. There has never been a Socialist, Fascist, Communist, Statist, etc. society that has lasted very long. They are all doomed to failure because of this faulty premise.

But, as a result of his arrogance, mankind keeps doing the same stupid thing. Now that you see my thesis, you can translate Egypt, Babylon, Rome, Washington, DC! If you have seen one, you have seen them all!

Today, United States citizens are totally dependent on Washington! If you don't believe it, try to take away a government program of some kind. Americans cannot conceive of life without government programs. Yet, Christians claim that they worship God. Based on their behavior, I don't believe it. They are back in slavery and can't even recognize their situation.

SOLUTION

Turn back to God. Focus our relationships on Him. Worship the Almighty daily in all that we do; in our homes, our work, our friendships. Recognize that He is our sustainer, Creator, the "Alpha and Omega." Make a Joyful noise unto the Lord. Serve the Lord with gladness. Know that it is He that has made us and not we ourselves. Come before His presence with Thanksgiving. Be thankful unto Him and bless

His name (Psalms 100). Change our mindset to Him. This will take a lot of work and effort. It will change us. Do you want to undergo this? It is a conscious decision. God has given us the tools to do this. We have fallen woefully short. It starts with me, it starts with you. It can spread. It is God centered, God directed.

It will not start with government directed programs (i.e. "Faith Based Initiatives," Social Security, War on Poverty, Social Restructuring, Equal Opportunity, OSHA, rise of the proletariat, Government/Business collaboration, Welfare, Warfare, "My country right or wrong," Patriotism, "Remember Pearl Harbor," "Remember the Maine," "Remember 9/11," et al.

Our strongest position will be on our knees, seeking His face, His will, and constantly seeking His guidance in all that we do. This is a tremendous challenge, given our past performance. Thanks be to God for His plan for our salvation, that He outlined from the beginning. That plan was Jesus ... not democracy, not statism, not Kings, not fascism, not communism, not popery, not sharia. We struggle on like sheep with our futile schemes of self government, ignoring the Way our Father in Heaven has provided. When will we learn?