

GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA—ESTHER
JOSHUA: TRIUMPH AFTER TRAGEDY
A SURVEY OF JOSHUA



The Heart of the Matter

In our survey of Scripture thus far, we have covered three great eras or periods: the primeval period (Genesis 1–11), the patriarchal period (Genesis 12–50), and the exodus period (Exodus through Deuteronomy). As we embark on a study of Joshua, we enter the historical section of the Old Testament, the first part of which we shall call the period of the rise of the Hebrew nation. This era is covered in five books—Joshua through 2 Samuel. In the book of Joshua, the Hebrews invade, conquer, distribute, and settle down in the land of Canaan. The events recorded in Joshua took place during approximately twenty-five years. All the way through it, one person stands out as God's appointed leader and model—the man from whom the book gets its name.



Discovering the Way

1. Introductory Matters

The book's title comes from the name of its key character, Joshua, while the theme of the book is *faith is the victory*.

2. Explanatory Survey

We see the book of Joshua progress in five key sections: commissioning the leader, preparing the people, conquering the enemy, dividing the spoil, and warning the victors.

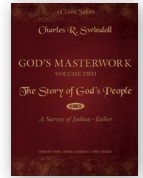


Starting Your Journey

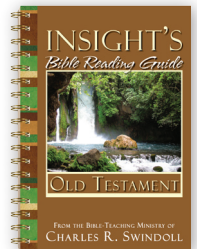
Looking at the book of Joshua as a whole leads us to two practical principles. First, what God promises, God accomplishes. And second, God's abundant provisions do not diminish the need to obey.



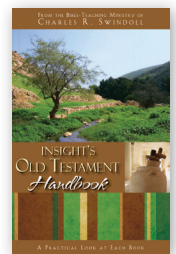
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JOSHUA

	Commissioning the Leader Preparing the People Invasion of land	Conquering the Enemy Subjection of land		Dividing the Spoil Distribution of land			Warning the Victors The Conclusion		
		CENTRAL CAMPAIGN		PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE			
OUTSIDE CANAAN / PROMISES GIVEN	The commission (1) The spying (2) The Jordan (3) The memorials (4) The consecration (5)	Jericho (6) Defeat at Ai (7) Victory at Ai (8) Gibeonites (9)	Southern campaign (10) Northern campaign and survey (11) Summary by kings (12)	Rueben, Gad, ½ Manasseh (13) Caleb's autobiography (14) Judah (15) Ephraim (16) ½ Manasseh (17)	Benjamin (18) Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Joshua (19)	Cities of refuge (20) Levites — 48 towns (21)	Civil war threat (22)	Separation (23) Service (24)	INSIDE CANAAN / PROMISES FULFILLED
	CHAPTERS 1–5	CHAPTERS 6–9	CHAPTERS 10–12	CHAPTERS 13–17	CHAPTERS 18–19	CHAPTERS 20–21	CHAPTER 22	CHAPTERS 23–24	
Theme	Obedient faith brings abundant blessing.								
Key Verses	1:8; 24:14–15								
Christ in Joshua	Typified by Joshua, a victorious leader whose name means “Yahweh is salvation”; pictured in Rahab’s scarlet cord, which symbolizes safety through Christ’s blood								

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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA–ESTHER
JUDGES: RECYCLED MISERY
A SURVEY OF JUDGES



The Heart of the Matter

It's rough for a nation to pull itself out of the swamp of political scandal and public distrust . . . but to do so *several times in a row* is unheard of. Or is it? If your nation had a hard time recovering from its latest bout with scandal, consider the nation of Israel after entering the land of Canaan under Joshua's leadership. Although clearly and forcefully instructed to drive out the godless inhabitants who still remained in the land, the Hebrews compromised and dragged their feet, ultimately ignoring God's direct command. This initiated a cycle that was, in fact, repeated several times during the years recorded in the book. God heard their cry for deliverance and graciously sent a deliverer (a "judge"). Once victory came, the judge died. After the judge's death, the nation again compromised and fell under the rule of godless people . . . resulting in another cry for deliverance. A study of the book of Judges reveals the struggle people have today with the sinful nature.



Discovering the Way

1. Several Introductory Facts

The name of the book refers to main figures of God's deliverance that crop up throughout the work, while the book as a whole records humanity's proneness to wander from God.

2. Analysis of the Book

The book of Judges makes clear the reasons for the Israelites' failure, the repetitious cycles of misery brought on by disobedience, and the resulting disgrace in society.

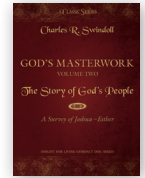


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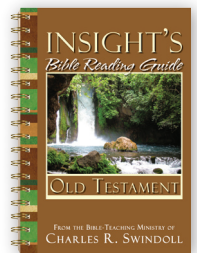
Judges offers three key truths that live on beyond the circumstances it portrays. First, depravity results in permissiveness when righteousness is ignored. Second, permissiveness leads to rationalization when holiness is ignored. And third, rationalization encourages rebellion and wickedness when repentance is ignored.



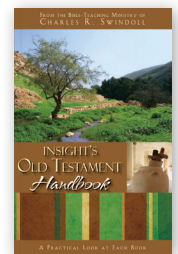
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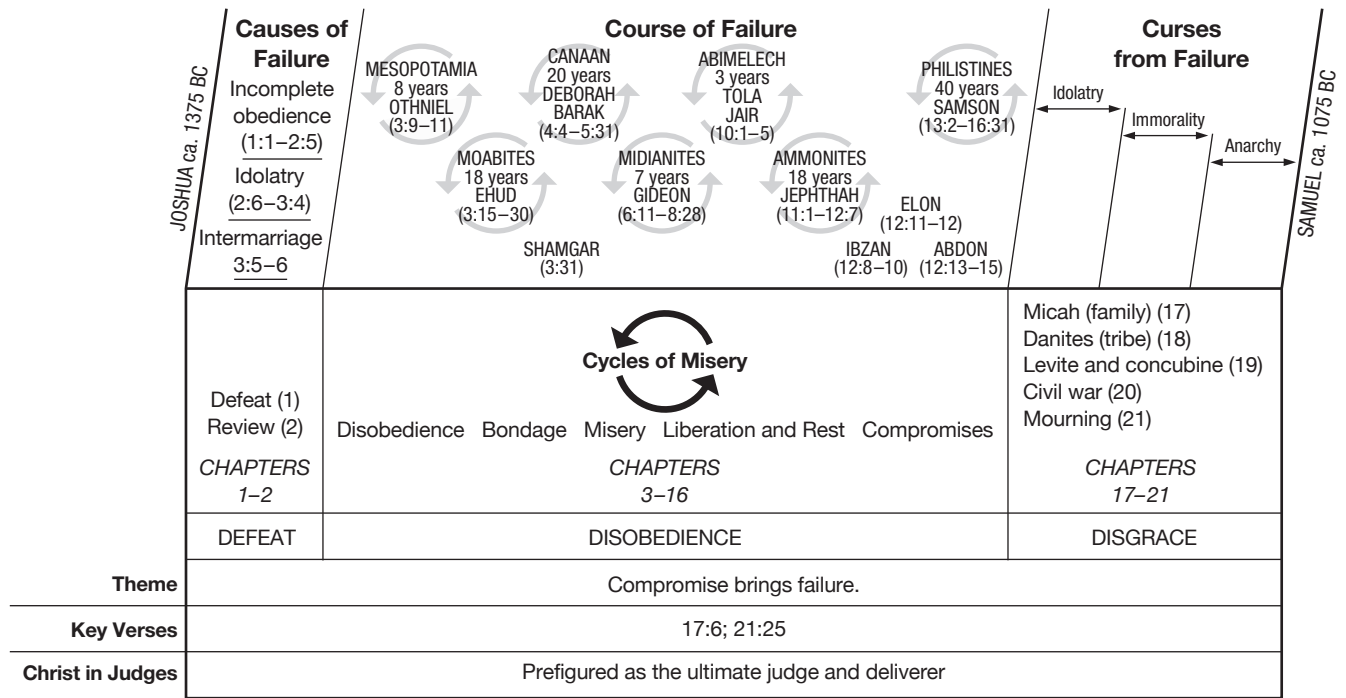


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JUDGES



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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA—ESTHER
RUTH: INTERLUDE OF LOVE
A SURVEY OF RUTH



The Heart of the Matter

We often discover priceless gems in the strangest places—deep in the rugged, dark corners of the earth. This is so with the book of Ruth. Like an exquisite rose blooming in a foul garbage dump, the story of Ruth adds elegance, grace, and charm to an otherwise depressing scene . . . especially when we realize that it transpired during the days when the judges governed and famine spread through the land. What hope this affords us! In spite of depravity's depths and our bleak surroundings, God still uses choice instruments—His unique and lovely vessels—to bring us reminders of His presence and care.



Discovering the Way

1. Foundational Facts about the Book

The book's title comes from its main character, a woman of Moab whom God used to bring His plan to completion. Ruth reminds us that God doesn't leave us in hard times—He helps us!

2. Survey Study of Ruth

Ruth responded rightly to her circumstances in four particular ways: Ruth had a right reaction to loss, a right response to loneliness, a right attitude toward companionship, and a right approach to marriage.

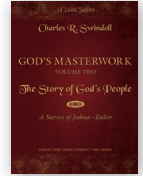


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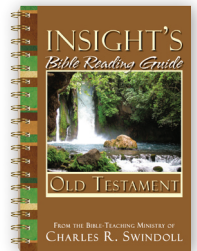
Three lessons linger from our study in Ruth. First, even in the worst of times, God still has His choice instruments. Second, in spite of normal and natural desires, God is still to be glorified. And third, there's no joy like being a grandparent.



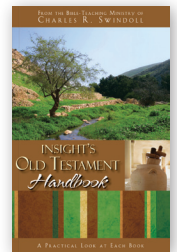
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RUTH

JUDGES TURBULENT TIMES	Ruth's Choice	Ruth's Service	Ruth's Claim	Ruth's Marriage	1 SAMUEL CHANGING TIMES
	NAOMI AND RUTH (Mutual grief)	RUTH AND NAOMI AND BOAZ (Mutual pursuit)		BOAZ AND RUTH (Mutual love)	
	"May the LORD grant that you may find rest." (1:9)	Naomi had a kinsman . . . whose name was Boaz. (2:1)	"Wait . . . until you know how the matter turns out." (3:18)	Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. (4:13)	
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	
Setting	"Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land" (1:1).				
Circumstance	Loss — deeper commitment		Gain — deeper love		
Emotion	Grief	Loneliness	Companionship	Rejoicing	
Theme	Redemption: God provides for those who trust Him in hard times.				
Key Verses	1:16; 3:11–12				
Christ in Ruth	Prefigured in the kinsman-redeemer				

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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA—ESTHER
1 SAMUEL: NATION IN TRANSITION
A SURVEY OF 1 SAMUEL



The Heart of the Matter

Transition times can be rather disconcerting. Those who have gone through the remodeling of a home can testify to that! Likewise, changes in leadership at one's place of employment or moves across the country or new policies and procedures set in motion bring the need to adapt. Being creatures of habit, we are disturbed by these changes. What is true for us individually is equally true on a national level. Presidential and governmental changes affect our feelings just as much as they alter the stock market. For centuries, God governed His people Israel. Throughout His theocratic rule, God used *His* anointed leaders to govern His people. We call the final group of these leaders the judges. The last judge—Samuel—transitioned the nation into a new way of governance. After Samuel, Israel was led by a king—King Saul, the *people's* choice. We will survey some of the changes that occurred during Israel's transition from theocracy to monarchy . . . from God's anointed servants to Israel's appointed king.



Discovering the Way

1. Comparing Six Books

The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles cover a period of nearly six hundred years in the life of God's people, a period that witnessed the nation's transition to being ruled by kings, the reigns of David and Solomon, the breaking apart of God's people, and the exile of both the northern and southern kingdoms.

2. Understanding 1 Samuel

While the book covers the transition from Samuel's judgeship to Saul's kingship, the pivotal moment in the book comes when Samuel anointed David as the future king of Israel.

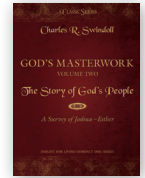


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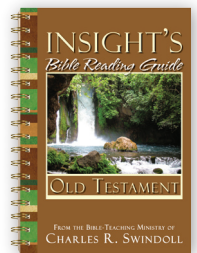
Two principles endure: no environmental handicap can cripple anyone whose life is touched by God. And second, no amount of high qualifications can preserve anyone who willfully rejects God.



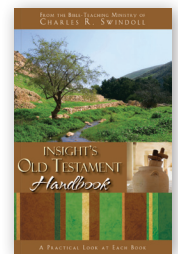
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FIRST SAMUEL

BEGINNING Samuel's godliness National hope Motivation Purity	Samuel The Last Judge				Saul The First King		ENDING Saul's apostasy Depression Personal despair Suicide
	BIRTH	GROWTH AND CALL	MINISTRY	CHANGE	REJECTION BY GOD	REBELLION AGAINST GOD	
	<i>CHAPTER</i> 1	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 2-3	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 4-7	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 8-12	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 13-16	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 17-31	
	Attitude of the People	Public trust			Public disillusionment		
Theme	Though leaders and nations change, God's purposes always move forward.						
Key Verses	8:6-9; 13:14						
Christ in 1 Samuel	Typified in Samuel, who was a prophet, priest, and judge; also portrayed in the life of David . . . shepherd, king, and born in Bethlehem						

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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA–ESTHER
2 SAMUEL: ECSTASY AND AGONY OF A KING
A SURVEY OF 2 SAMUEL



The Heart of the Matter

No question about it. King David remains among the brightest lights of the Bible. So significant was David that God set aside an entire book of the Old Testament to cover David's forty-year reign . . . from his highest pinnacle of achievement to his lowest valley of misery and defeat. Without sparing many details of either extreme, the Spirit of God recorded (with admiration as well as with grief) the things that made David great and the things that led to David's agony of soul. The book of 2 Samuel traces a colorful, as well as contrasting, life and holds lessons that live on to this very day.



Discovering the Way

1. Some General Information

The book of 2 Samuel covers the reign of King David—some forty years—a reign filled with great victories in battle and stunning defeats in temptation.

2. Years of Triumph and Victory

David began his reign with a lengthy period of triumph on the battlefield and an expansion of the nation of Israel.

3. Years of Trouble and Misery

From the pinnacle of success, David fell hard—first in his initial sin with Bathsheba and then in his covering of that sin. David's life was difficult from then on, as he dealt with the consequences of his choices.

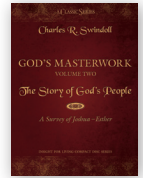


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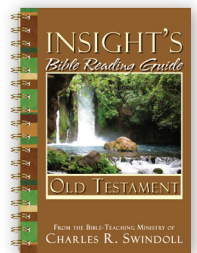
Three lessons linger as we consider 2 Samuel. First, prosperity and ease are perilous times, not blessings. Second, gross sin is a culmination of a process, not a sudden act. And third, confession and repentance help heal a wound but will never erase the scars.



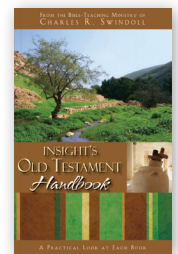
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SECOND SAMUEL

	David's Triumphs		David's Troubles			Appendix
	Reigning in Hebron over Judea	Reigning in Jerusalem over all Israel	With himself	With his family	With his nation	Miscellaneous narratives
	David's lament (1) David's crowning (2) David's increase (3-4)	A new capital (5) A new worship center (6) A new dynasty (7) A new boundary (8) A new son (9) Another new boundary (10)	David's sin (11) Nathan's denunciation (12)	Amnon's immorality (13) Absalom's crime and flight (14) Absalom's revolt (15) Absalom's counselors (16-17) Absalom's death (18)	David's return (19) Sheba's revolt (20)	A famine (21) A song (22) A prophecy (23) A failure (24)
	CHAPTERS 1-4	CHAPTERS 5-10	CHAPTERS 11-12	CHAPTERS 13-18	CHAPTERS 19-20	CHAPTERS 21-24
Theme	Blessings or consequences follow every action.					
Key Verses	7:12-13					
Christ in 2 Samuel	Foreshadowed in David's reign, which, though imperfect, is characterized by justice, wisdom, and integrity; the Messiah, the Son of David, is promised as an offspring of the Davidic line and One who will sit upon David's throne forever.					

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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA—ESTHER
1 KINGS: SOLOMON AND A CIVIL WAR
A SURVEY OF 1 KINGS



The Heart of the Matter

One of the haunting perils of leadership is the great divorce between what happens at the office and what happens at home. Many a man and many a woman may hit a home run at the office, but what good is it if they strike out at home? This is the dilemma Solomon faced as he rose to the position of king over Israel. Blessed with a wonderful opportunity for success for both nation and family, Solomon did justice to neither. The national success Solomon achieved during his reign proved to be fool's gold; it all crumbled under the inept leadership of his son and the descendants that followed. Solomon's failures to lead in the home eventually impacted his nation—a sad demise to a once great nation.



Discovering the Way

1. Dividing the Book

The first half of 1 Kings portrays Israel united under the rule of one man. The second half of the book traces the nation divided and under the rule of many men.

2. Glorious Solomon to Disrupted Nation

The book of 1 Kings begins by tracking the rise of Solomon and Israel to a position of great power and influence. However, as the king faltered near the end of his life, the nation fell into war and immorality.

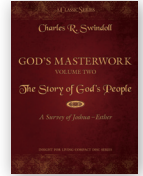


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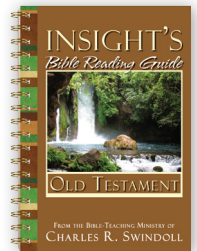
Four enduring lessons come out of our study of this book. First, unchecked, sinful bents are passed from parent to child. Second, we are most vulnerable when we least expect it. Third, God always has the right person to match the hour. And finally, when life seems especially dark, God comes especially close to His followers.



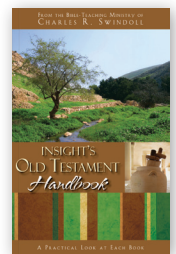
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FIRST KINGS

POLITICALLY David succeeded by Solomon	Solomon “In all his glory” (Luke 12:27)		Decline and Demise	Disruption “A kingdom divided against itself” (Mark 3:24)		POLITICALLY King after king
NATIONALLY Kingdom united	Crowned and inaugurated (1–2) Married and exalted (3–4) Temple erected and dedicated (5–8) Warned and blessed (9–10)			Internal conflict and hostility (12–14) Civil war and idolatry (15–16) Ahab and Elijah (17–22) “He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done” (22:53).		NATIONALLY Kingdom divided
ECONOMICALLY Solid and secure						ECONOMICALLY Unstable
SPIRITUALLY Shaky	CHAPTERS 1–10		CHAPTER 11	CHAPTERS 12–22		SPIRITUALLY Empty
Time	40 years			80 years		
Kingdom	United and strong			Divided and weak		
People	Solomon			Jeroboam to Ahaziah Rehoboam to Jehoshaphat		
Identity	“All Israel . . . sons of Israel”			North: Israel; Samaria; Ephraim South: Judah; Jerusalem		
Theme	Spiritual and moral decay lead to destruction.					
Key Verses	9:3–9; 11:11–13					
Christ in 1 Kings	Solomon’s wisdom, which foreshadows Him who “became to us wisdom from God” (1 Corinthians 1:30); the prophetic ministry and miracles of Elijah					

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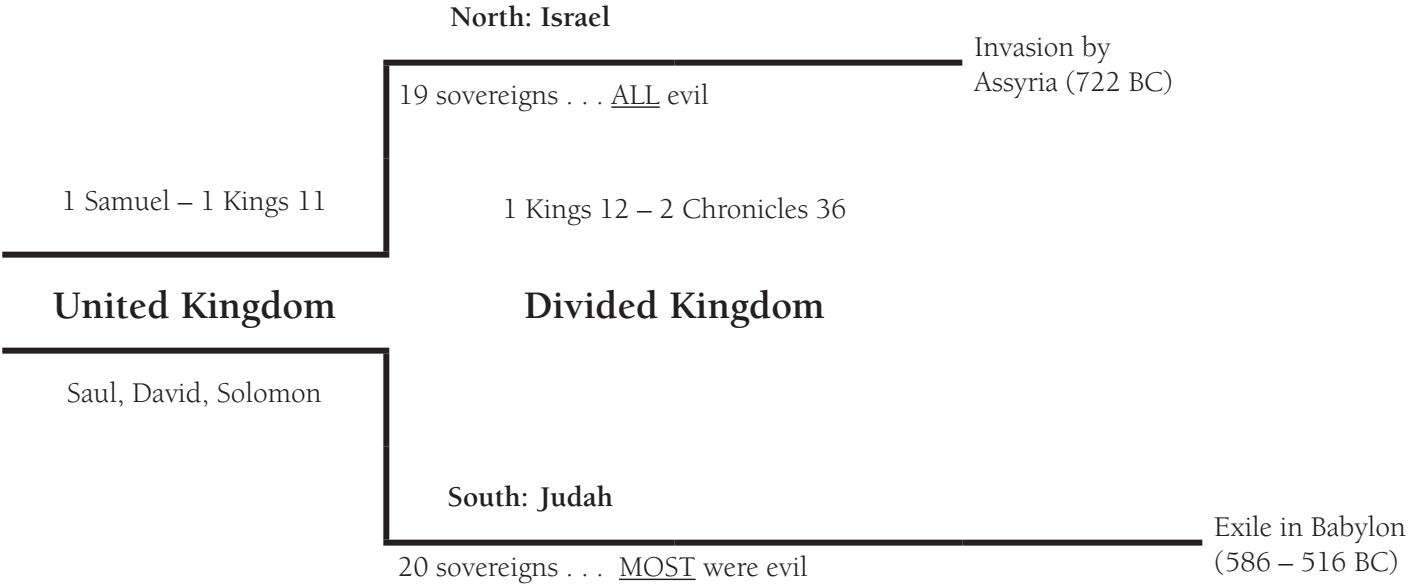




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1 KINGS: SOLOMON AND A CIVIL WAR
A SURVEY OF 1 KINGS



SURVEY CHART OF CIVIL WAR



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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA—ESTHER
2 KINGS: FROM COMPROMISE TO CAPTIVITY
A SURVEY OF 2 KINGS



The Heart of the Matter

Second Kings revolves around a principle of life that not even God violates: persistent sin may be forgiven, but its consequences cannot be erased. The book of 2 Kings plays out this truth on a national scale, as the newly divided nation of Israel faltered time and again in its commitment to God's plan for them. Where they were to be a light to the world, they instead wallowed in the darkness of the surrounding people. The few faithful followers of God during this time struggled against the tide of sin and rebellion. Nonetheless, they saw their nation fall to outside powers and watched their people—who knew better from the beginning—endure judgment. Let's trace Israel and Judah's slow slide into exile, asking ourselves along the way how we would react in the face of such a strong opposition to God's will and ways.



Discovering the Way

1. Background Information

Second Kings is a direct continuation of 1 Kings. The end of 1 Kings portrays the nation of Israel in dire circumstances due to their sin. Second Kings continues to trace that history until the inevitable judgment that came as a result of their rebellion against God.

2. From Bad to Worse

After beginning with a focus on the northern kingdom (chapters 1–10), 2 Kings divides its focus between north and south (11–17). Once the Assyrians forced the northern kingdom into exile, the book concludes with a focus on the southern kingdom until their exile to Babylon (18–25).

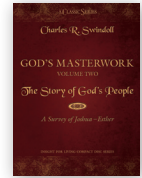


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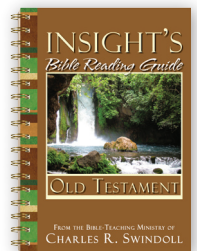
What if your nation is in its final days of stability or influence in its region or the world? Could it be that you will be called upon in your sphere of influence to be as a prophet of old, to speak the truth to those without hope?



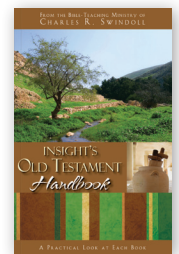
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SECOND KINGS

	Northern Kingdom Israel	Both Kingdoms (Alternating)	Southern Kingdom Judah
	CHAPTERS 1-10	CHAPTERS 11-17	CHAPTERS 18-25
Northern Prophets	Elijah Elisha	Jonah Amos Hosea	
Southern Prophets		Obadiah Joel Micah Isaiah	Nahum Zephaniah Jeremiah Habakkuk
Northern Kings	Ahaziah to Hoshea		
Southern Kings		Jehoram to Zedekiah	
Key Chapters	17 and 25		
Theme	God is patient, but He does not allow persistent sin to go unpunished.		
Key Verses	17:22-23		
Christ in 2 Kings	Foreshadowed in the faithfulness of some Judean kings; seen in the healing ministry and compassion of Elisha		

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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA—ESTHER
2 KINGS: FROM COMPROMISE TO CAPTIVITY
A SURVEY OF 2 KINGS

A CHART OF THE KINGS OF "ISRAEL" AND "JUDAH"

**The Kingdom of "Israel"
(NORTH)**

Jeroboam Nadab Baasha Elah Zimri Omri Ahab Ahaziah Jehoram Jehu Jehoahaz Jehoash Jeroboam II Zachariah Shallum Manahem Pekahiah Pekah Hoshea	Assyrian Captivity (722 BC)
--	-----------------------------------

(All 19 northern sovereigns were evil.)

Civil War Begins
930 BC

Northern Prophets: Jonah, Amos, Hosea, (plus Elijah and Elisha)

**The Kingdom of "Judah"
(SOUTH)**

Rehoboam Abijah *Asa *Jehoshaphat Jehoram Ahaziah Athaliah *Joash *Amaziah *Uzziah *Jotham Ahaz *Hezekiah Manasseh Amon *Josiah Jehoahaz Jehoiakim Jehoiachin Zedekiah	Babylonian Captivity (586 BC)
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(*Of 20 sovereigns, only eight were good.)

Southern Prophets: Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum,
Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah

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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA–ESTHER
1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: REASSURANCE FOR A REMNANT
A SURVEY OF 1 AND 2 CHRONICLES



The Heart of the Matter

“What a waste!” That’s the common response of a novice when the Chronicles are opened. At first glance, the books seem boring, tedious, and needless. Even after wading through nine chapters of genealogies, the remaining sections appear redundant and dry—a little like spending the afternoon reading telephone listings or searching the holdings of your public library. But God preserved these books. With meticulous care, He watched over their composition and preservation. To bore us? *Never!* Somehow, He is pleased to have this account on record for reasons not obvious to most. In this study, we shall discover how essential these incidentals really are.



Discovering the Way

1. Name the Books

We can glean an understanding of what the book holds from the three different names it holds—one in Hebrew, one in Greek, and one in Latin.

2. Authorship and Place in Sacred Canon

Ezra penned the books of Chronicles and, chronologically, they close the Old Testament canon.

3. Outline and Object of the Chronicles

The Chronicles show us God’s view of history, they encourage obedience in God’s people, and they warn against disobedience.

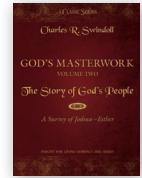


Starting Your Journey

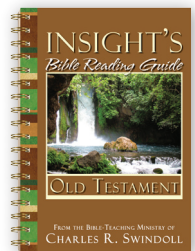
Four key lessons arise from our study of 1 and 2 Chronicles. First, there are two forces continually at work—tender compassion of God and tough rebellion of humanity. Second, being at the end of God’s patience is a fearful experience. Third, living outside the blessing of God is best described in one word—*desolation*. And, finally, even though our consciences may say “forget it,” the Chronicles say “remember.”



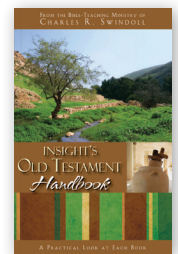
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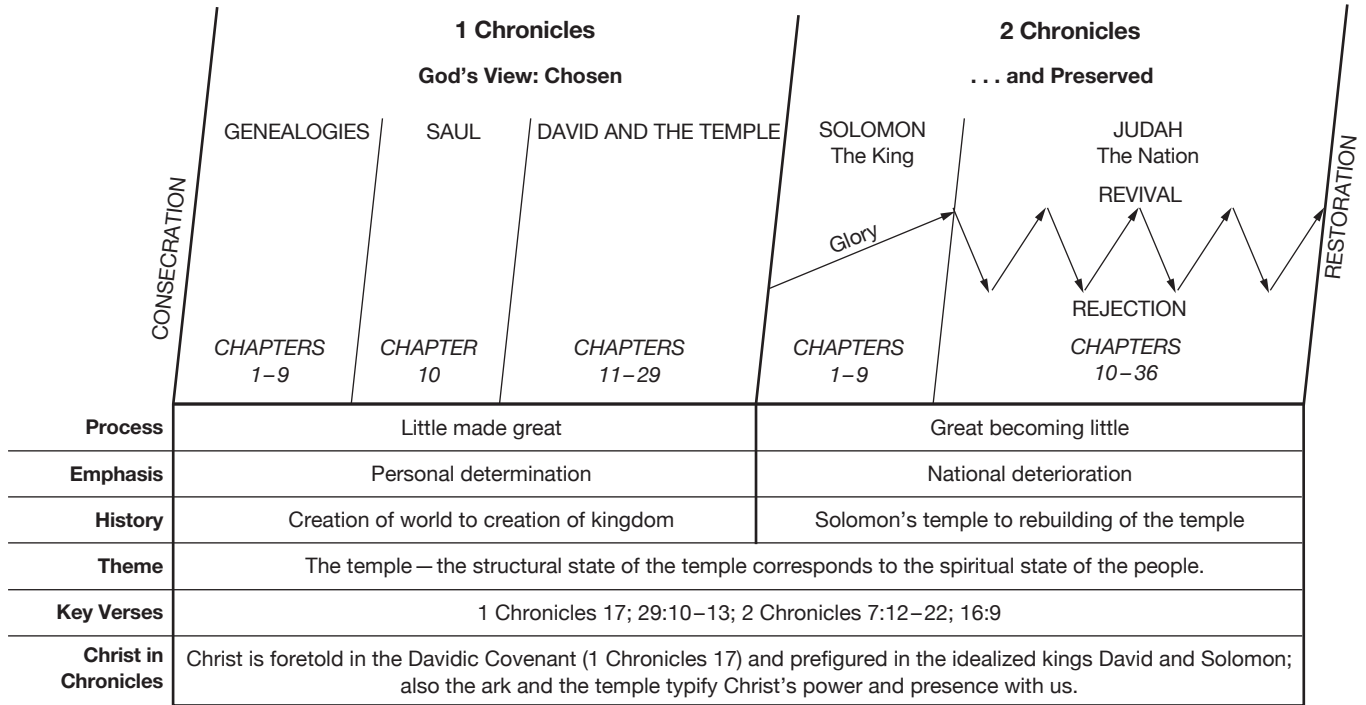
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FIRST AND SECOND CHRONICLES



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THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA–ESTHER
EZRA: TRUE MAN OF THE WORD
A SURVEY OF EZRA



The Heart of the Matter

Some people stand out from the crowd—charismatic, confrontational, and colorful—while others tend to blend—quiet, contemplative, and studious. While the popular opinion might be that only the former group has the greatest spiritual impact on the world, Scripture is filled with people from both groups who have impacted the world positively for the Lord. Ezra, who falls into that latter group, is certainly no exception. Given the responsibility of leading a group of God's people back to Israel from Babylon to reestablish the proper way of worship, Ezra performed admirably—not because he was an electric personality but because he was a true man of the Word.



Discovering the Way

1. Let's Get a Little History under Our Belts

After generations of near continual sin, God's people in the southern kingdom of Judah were exiled to Babylon.

2. Understanding the Flow of the Book

The book of Ezra begins by describing the first group of Israelites returning to their land from their Babylonian captivity and shifts in chapter seven to describe the second group of Israelites returning from Babylon.

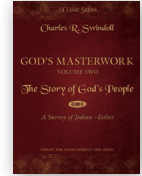


Starting Your Journey

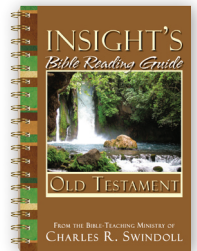
What is your objective? Do you wish to become a careful student of God's Word? If you pursue that goal, you will become one of those rare individuals who can open this book and give hope to the hurting.



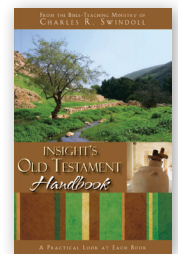
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EZRA

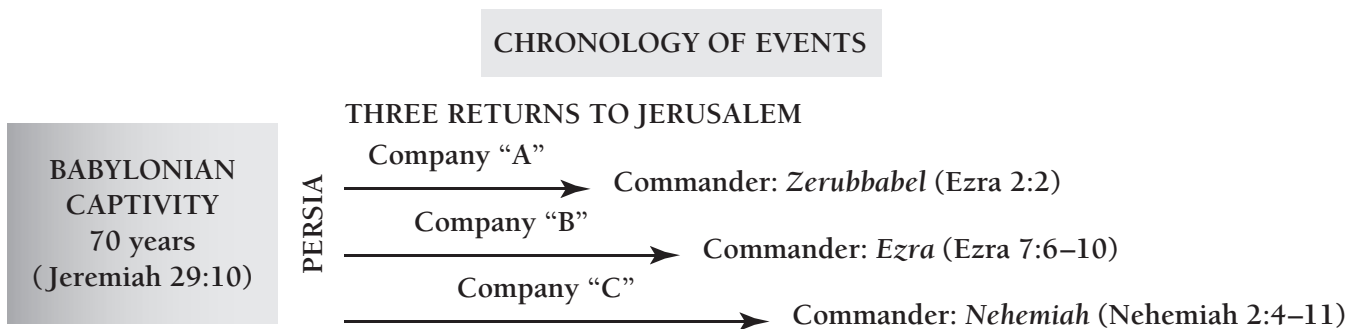
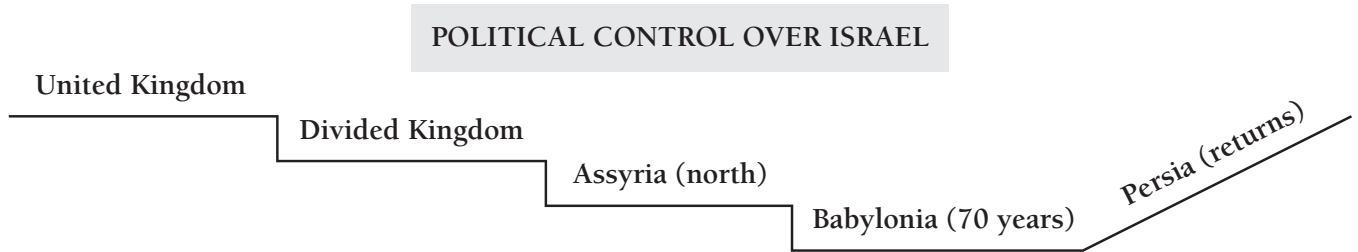
		Construction Leader: Zerubbabel		Reformation Leader: Ezra	
CHRONICLES	CENSUS AND JOURNEY	Temple Foundation Opposition Determination Completion	CHAPTERS 1-2	CENSUS AND JOURNEY	Revival Condition Confession Covenant Cleansing
		CHAPTERS 3-6		CHAPTERS 7-8	CHAPTERS 9-10
Emphasis	Construction of the temple			Reformation of the people	
Persian King	Cyrus	Darius	XERXES	Artaxerxes	
Scope	National	General		Personal	Specific
Theme	Revival and reformation				
Key Verses	1:1-4; 3:2; 7:10				
Christ in Ezra	His birth anticipated in the preservation of the Davidic line and the remnant's return to the Promised Land; His work as spiritual rebuilders and restorer pictured in Zerubbabel and Ezra; His mediating presence and glory pictured in the altar and the temple				

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Helpful Facts Related to the Book of Ezra



PERSIAN KINGS OF BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE

KING	DATES BC	CHAPTERS IN EZRA	OTHER OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS
Cyrus	538–530	1–6	Haggai (520) Zechariah (520–515)
Cambyses	530–522		
Smerdis	522		
Darius I	521–486		
Xerxes I (Ahasuerus)	486–465		
Artaxerxes I	464–423	4:7–10:44	Malachi (450–400) Nehemiah (445–425)
Darius II	423–404		

CONTRASTS BETWEEN TWO BOOKS

EZRA	NEHEMIAH
Spiritual emphasis Temple and Scripture Commitment of a man Revival and reformation	Practical emphasis Wall and government Determination of a nation Motivation and accomplishment

GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA—ESTHER
NEHEMIAH: SOFTHEARTED HARD HAT
A SURVEY OF NEHEMIAH



The Heart of the Matter

Nehemiah is one of the great lesser-knowns of the Bible. A man of tremendous zeal, Nehemiah also exhibited tenderness toward the Lord that balanced his character like few people in Scripture. Nehemiah was a man who saw a need—a need to travel from his home in Babylon and rebuild the destroyed walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah couldn't do this alone; he needed the king's support. And with much prayer, he approached the king and received the backing he needed. What Nehemiah didn't realize was that his toughest tasks were still before him.



Discovering the Way

1. Background to the Book

Nehemiah was a child of the captivity. He was born in Babylon but eventually immigrated to Jerusalem with a group of returning exiles.

2. Three Roles to Fill

Throughout his life, Nehemiah played three strikingly different roles, each of which had a unique impact on the nation of Israel: cupbearer to the king, builder of the wall, and governor of the people.

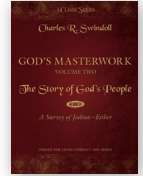


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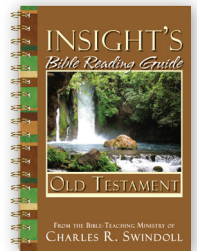
Three truths emerge from our study of Nehemiah. First, dealing with problems begins with honest observation; before there can be a solution, there must be detection. Second, correcting what is honestly observed demands fearless conviction. And third, honest observation and fearless conviction must be tempered with authentic devotion.



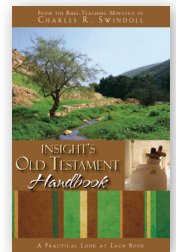
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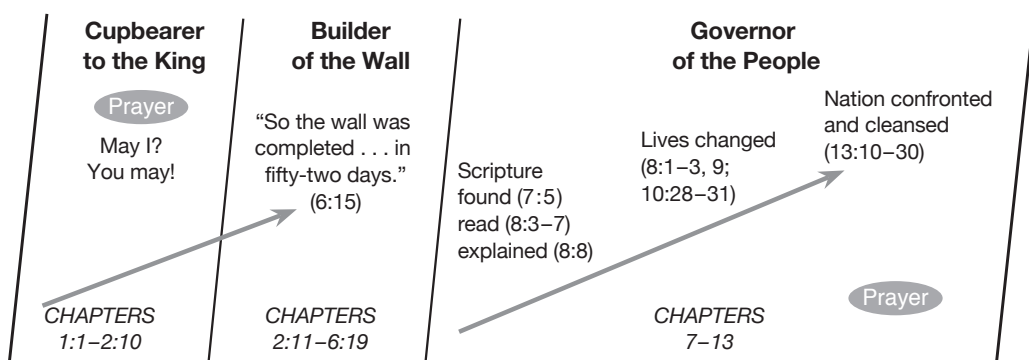


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NEHEMIAH



Location	Susa, Persia		Jerusalem in Judah	
Focus	Leadership of a man		Revival of a nation	
Subject	Burden	Project	Scriptures	Reforms
Difficulties	The King	Enemies	Tradition	Compromise
Victories	Release	Accomplishment	Obedience	Changes
Theme	Nehemiah's trust in the covenant-keeping God			
Key Verses	6:15-16; 8:8-10; 9:1-38			
Christ in Nehemiah	Suggested in Nehemiah, who leaves an exalted position to identify with the plight of his people and lead them into restoration; pictured in Nehemiah's prayerful dependence on God			

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GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME TWO
THE STORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF JOSHUA–ESTHER
ESTHER: BEAUTY AND THE BEST
A SURVEY OF ESTHER



The Heart of the Matter

The book of Esther could appear, at first glance, to be a fictional work. It bears all the marks of a short story: a dramatic plot, a villain, a hero, a damsel in distress, and a surprising climax, followed by everyone living happily ever after. But it is absolutely authentic, bearing all the marks of inspired literature. It is, in fact, a vital link in the chain of Jewish history, as it reveals what neither Ezra nor Nehemiah includes: crucial experiences of the Jews who remained in Persia. As we dig into this account, keep an eye on the central crisis that drives the work.



Discovering the Way

1. Unique Facts about Esther

We see in Esther a series of strong contrasts with Ruth that links these two women who are so significant in Jewish history.

2. Dramatic Account of Esther

God providentially placed Esther in just the right situations throughout the book, giving her the opportunity to advocate for her people.

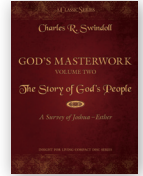


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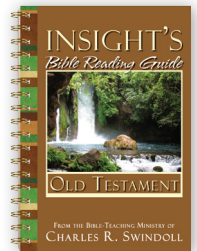
We can learn two clear lessons from a survey of Esther. First, the providence of God does not require high visibility. Second, just because a woman obeys or submits to her husband does not mean she has low esteem.



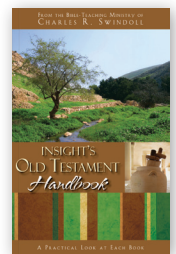
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ESTHER

God's providence among His people during . . .

	Hard Times				Happy Times		
	King's Banquet	Haman's Edict	Queen's Courage	God's Deliverance	Mordecai's Edict	Jews' Rejoicing	Shalom!
	Honoring the kingdom		Urging of Mordecai	Mordecai honored		Enemies destroyed	
	Honoring the new queen		Approaching the king	Haman hanged		Feast established	
	CHAPTERS 1-2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTERS 4-5	CHAPTERS 6-7	CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9	CHAPTER 10
Circumstances	Threat and trust				Deliverance and praise		
Feasts	of the king	of the queen			of the nation		
Dates	483 BC				473 BC		
Theme	The sovereign accomplishment of God's purposes through ordinary people and apparent coincidences						
Key Verses	4:12-16; 10:3						
Christ in Esther	Pictured in Esther, who was an advocate for her people, even willing to die for them						

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