

## RESTORING THE GATES      The United Kingdom

SAUL      *I Samuel 11:15 – 31:13*

DAVID      *II Samuel 2:4 – I Kings 2:11*

SOLOMON      *I Kings 1:39 – 11:43*

### The Divided Kingdom

<u>931 BC</u>	<u>Northern Kingdom</u>	<u>Southern Kingdom</u>	
BAD	Jeroboam (22 yrs)	Rehoboam (17 years)	BAD
BAD	Nabad (2 yrs)	Abijam (3 yrs)	BAD
BAD	Baash (24 yrs)	Asa (41 yrs)	GOOD
---	Elah (2 yrs)	Jehoshaphat (25 yrs)	GOOD
BAD	Zimri (7 days)	Jehoram (8 yrs)	BAD
BAD+++	Ormi (12 yrs)	Ahaziah (1 yr)	BAD
BAD++	Ahab (22 yrs)	Athaliah (1 yr, female Queen Usurper) -----	
BAD	Ahaziah (2 yrs)	Joash (40 yrs)	GOOD
BAD	Jehoram (12 yrs)	Amaziah (29 yrs)	GOOD-
GOOD -	Jehu (28 yrs) Jezebel	Azariah (52 yrs)	GOOD
BAD	Jehoahaz (17 yrs)	Jotham (16 yrs)	GOOD
BAD	Jehoash (16 yrs)	Ahaz (16 yrs)	BAD
BAD	Jeroboam II (41 yrs)	Hezekiah (29 yrs)	GOOD
BAD	Zechariah (6 mons)	<b>Manasseh (55 yrs)</b>	<b>BAD</b> ++++
----	Shallam (1 month)	Amon (2 yrs)	BAD
BAD	Menahem (10 yrs)	<b>Josiah (31 yrs)</b>	<b>GOOD</b> +++
BAD	Pekahiah (2 yrs)	Jehoahaz (3 months)	BAD
BAD	Pekah (20 yrs)	Jehoiakim (11 yrs)	BAD
<u>BAD</u>	<u>Hoseah (9 yrs)</u>	Jehoiachmin (3 months)	BAD
<b>722 BC, 241 yrs, 7 months, 7 days</b>		<u>Zedekiah (11 yrs)</u>	<u>BAD</u>
		<b>586 BC, 393 years, 6 months</b>	

**Southern Kingdom taken into Captivity.  
Babylon was restored after 70 years.  
Only 8 Godly Kings of 21 (13 Bad Kings)**

### King Manasseh

*Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.*

- *For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed.*
- *he raised up altars for Baal, and*

- *made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and*
- *He worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them.*
- *He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem I will put My name.”*
- *And he buil altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.*
- *Also, he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums.*
- *He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.*
- *He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son,*

*“In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.”*

*But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do eviler than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. (2 Kings 21:1-9)*

Manasseh was one of the vilest kings of Judah. He became king at the age of 12 and reigned for 55 years. Under his leadership Israel engaged in every practice that offended the Lord. The passage above identifies 12 separate offenses:

1. Rebuild the high places destroyed by his father Hezekiah.
2. Built altars to Baal.
3. Wooden images (idols)
4. Worshiped the Host of Heaven and served them (astrology)
5. Built altars in the House of the Lord
6. Made his son pass through the fire.
7. Practiced witchcraft.
8. Consulted Mediums and spiritualists.
9. Carved an Asherah
10. Seduced Israel into evil
11. Ignored the Law of Moses
12. Provoked the Lord to anger.

### **King Josiah**

Josiah became king at the age of eight and ruled Israel for the next 31 years. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and completely reversed all the evil of Manasseh. Josiah humbled himself before the Lord and as a result the Lord did not bring the judgment on Israel that He intended because of Manasseh’s evil.

## **What happened that made Josiah a great reformer?**

In **2 Kings 22 and 23** we read that Josiah authorized repairs to the House of the Lord. He sent his scribe, Shaphan, to give Hilkiah (the priest) instructions. During that exchange Hilkiah gives Shaphan the Book of the Law that had been found. Shaphan took and read the Book of the Law to King Josiah. God's law pierced his heart, and he tore his clothes in remorse and repentance. Josiah called for Hilkiah and said,

*Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us. (2 Kings 22:13)*

Hilkiah did inquire of the Lord and reported back: God would show favor and mercy to Josiah.

The first thing Josiah did was gather the people. All the men, the prophets, the priests, and people of Jerusalem were gathered, and the Book of the Law was read to the people. At the end, Josiah made a covenant publicly to obey all that the Lord commanded.

*Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant. (2 Kings 23:3)*

## **All reform begins with the submission to GODS WORD**

When the Word of God is ignored or forgotten people will naturally gravitate toward sin. It is the scriptures that teach us the will of God – what pleases Him and what breaks His heart. Without the knowledge of God and the worship of God people will stray, destruction will follow. The church is always one generation away from falling away. If there is compromised in the pulpit there will be sin in the pew. Each generation needs to hear a clear and straightforward message from the Word of God.

## **Josiah did a thorough house cleaning**

All the articles, idols, symbols, poles, and altars in the House of the Lord were removed and burned. All the high places and their altars were torn down and destroyed.

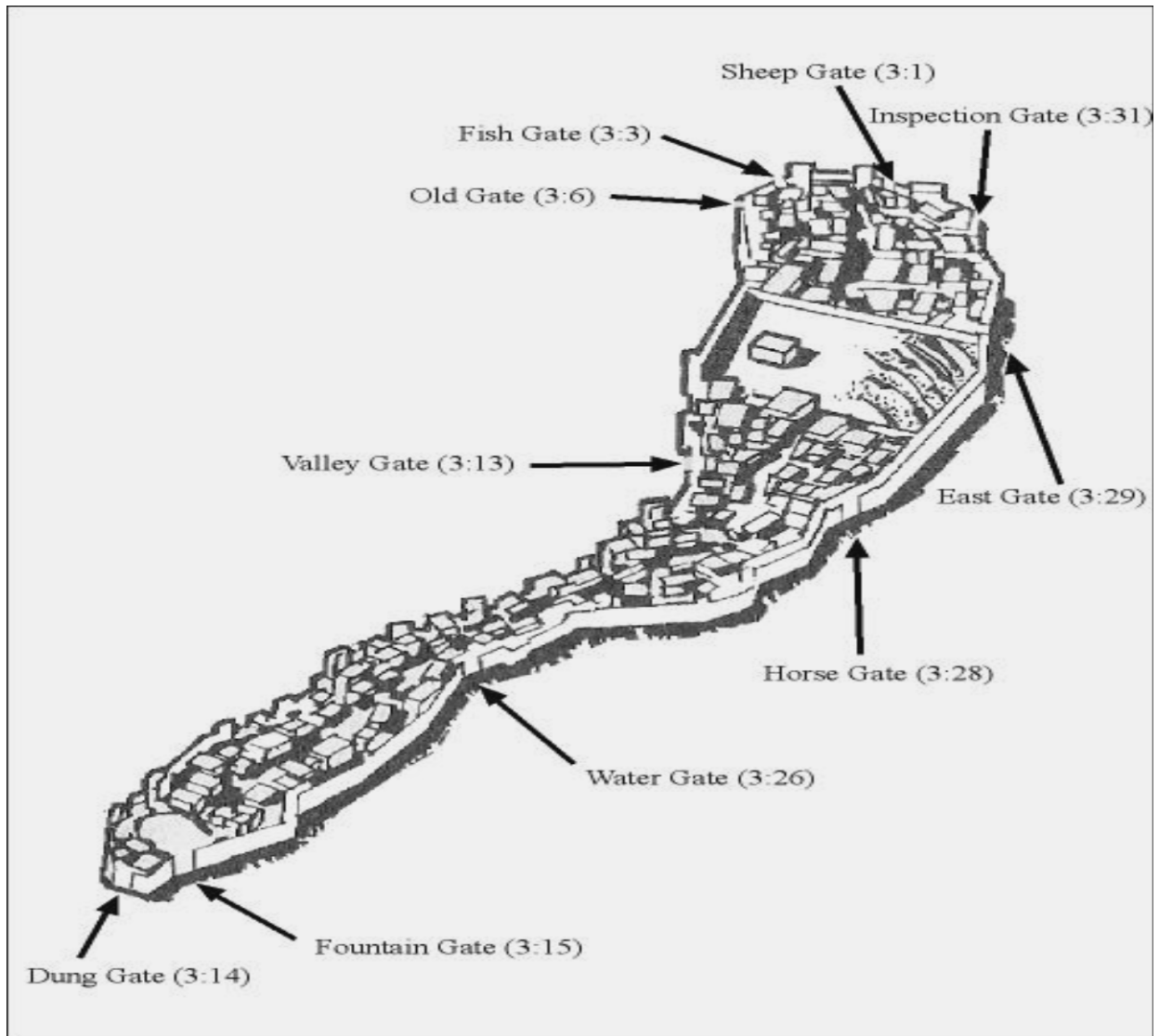
- All the priests who served Baal were executed along with the mediums, spiritualists and those who consulted the stars.
- All the male cult prostitutes and the women who wove hangings for Asherah were removed and their booths destroyed.
- He forbids the worship of Molech which included making children walk through the fire.
- and ruthlessly removed and destroyed all that represented pagan worship and idolatry.
- He personally destroyed the altars, pillars, and symbols.
- He was directly involved with the “dirty” work of cleansing the temple and the territory.

Once the offensive idols and images were removed, he restored the worship of God and the celebration of the Passover.

The writer of *2 Kings* put it this way, *Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. (2 Kings 23:25)*

**Zephaniah** – Prophet before the Exile Chapter 2:1-4 Reforms short lived: 2 Kings 23:26-27

### **Nehemiah; The Gates of Jerusalem**



- |                        |                         |                        |                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| • <i>Nehemiah 3:1</i>  | The Sheep Gate          | • <i>Nehemiah 3:15</i> | The Fountain Gate   |
| • <i>Nehemiah 3:3</i>  | The Fish Gate           | • <i>Nehemiah 3:26</i> | The Water Gate      |
| • <i>Nehemiah 3:6</i>  | The Jeshanah (old) Gate | • <i>Nehemiah 3:28</i> | The Horse Gate      |
| • <i>Nehemiah 3:13</i> | The Valley Gate         | • <i>Nehemiah 3:29</i> | The East Gate       |
| • <i>Nehemiah 3:14</i> | The Dung Gate           | • <i>Nehemiah 3:31</i> | The Inspection Gate |

## The Gates and What They Represent

### The Sheep Gate

This gate represents **WORSHIP**. Worship is central to our relationship with God. It was placed first in the Ten Commandments. The worship of God was to be first. No other God's were allowed.

### The Fish Gate

This gate represents **EVANGELISM**. We are to be fishers of men. Catching fish is a primary purpose for the church. Jesus has established His church to proclaim His gospel so people can be saved. We are bringing forth this "good news" to a lost and dying world. In many churches this gate is severely broken and needs to be restored.

### The Jeshanah (old) Gate

This is a gate that refers to putting off the OLD MAN or FALLEN NATURE. It is a gate representing transformation and crucifying the flesh. In *Ephesians 4* and *Colossians 3* Paul speaks directly about putting away the works of the flesh.

### The Valley Gate

This gate speaks of going out into ALL THE WORLD – beyond Evangelism the church is to be out into the world engaging in the works and ministry of Jesus. Do we feed the hungry? Do we assist those in need, poverty, distress, and illness? WE are not to be cloistered away behind the walls but sent into the world. Jesus said, "*As the Father SENT Me, I send you.*" (*John 20:21*).

### The Dung Gate

Dung is dung and sin is sin. This is the gate where what is bad is removed. It represents **CONFESSION**. Sin must be confessed and should be confessed to another person not just to God. There is power in confessing your sins to another human being and this practice should be encouraged.

### The Fountain Gate

This is NEW LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. You can reference Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well in *John 4* where Jesus speaks of Living Water bubbling up from within you. The restoration of this gate embraces Pentecost and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### The Water Gate

Here we have **BAPTISM** or joining – it refers to church growth. People coming to drink who are thirsty, dry, parched and barren. Water is life – no water, no life. Water also causes things to grow so a second application of this gate has to do with maturity, growing up, bearing fruit, and is directly connected to the LIVING WORD OF GOD.

### The Horse Gate

This gate represents SPIRITUAL BATTLE – the fact that we are engaged in a cosmic struggle between Satan and Jesus, good and evil, heaven and hell. This is our intercession, this is our prayers, this is putting on our armor (*Ephesians 6*), and this is our faith, our training, and our ministries.

## **The Eastern Gate**

This refers to our hope and the RESURRECTION. When Jesus returns to earth, he will put his feet on the Mount of Olives and walk through the Kidron Valley and enter the city of Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate. In mockery of that prophecy the Muslims have completely blocked this gate with stone masonry.

## **The Inspection Gate**

Here we are called to SELF EXAMINATION and GIFT DISCOVERY. We are to inspect ourselves regarding sin, but we are also to take stock in how we are gifted to serve. All of us are uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit to ministry and contribute to the Body of Christ (*I Cor 12*)

## **Reforms Under Nehemiah**

### **God's Word was Restored – Preached and Explained –**

This was at the WATER GATE – and it took 6 hours. It was not just read, it was explained. The impact on the people resulted in major changes.

*All the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. So, on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand.*

*He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.*

*Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces on the ground.*

*They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. (Nehemiah 8:1- 3, 5-6, 8)*

## **Conviction, Confession and Repentance**

The reading of God's Law brought forth a true repentance and amendment of life. They understood what they had done and were more than sorry, they wanted to be changed. This was expressed externally with dust, sackcloth, fasting and confession. This was a corporate activity involving all the people.

*On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting, and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law*

*of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God. (Nehemiah 9:1-3)*

### **Provision For Worship, Temple, And Buildings Restored**

The people also became aware that they had neglected the worship of God, the Temple, and the Priests. In obedience to God's word the required provisions for Temple Worship were now given.

*"We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands to give a third of a shekel each year for the service of the house of our God.*

*"We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the first fruits of our crops and of every fruit tree.*

*The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine, and oil to the storerooms where the articles for the sanctuary are kept and where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers stay. "We will not neglect the house of our God." (Nehemiah 10; 32,35,39)*

### **Temple Cleansed**

Like Josiah and other Godly kings in the past, Nehemiah cleansed all that defiled the House of the Lord. This purification removed all that defiled a Holy place of worship.

*Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense. (Nehemiah 13:7-9)*

### **Tithe Was Restored**

Tithing was central to the worship of God. It provided income to cover the costs of running the temple and feeding the priests. It also was a means of acknowledging God as the source of all they had and a means of publicly honoring God and thanking God for his blessings.

*I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. So, I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts. All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine, and oil into the storerooms.*

*(Nehemiah 13:10 – 12)*

## **Sabbath Was Restored**

Can you imagine how far Israel had fallen?

*When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. But I warned them and said, "Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will lay hands on you." From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy. (Nehemiah 13: 15-22)*

## **Mixed Marriages Forbidden and Foreigners Expelled**

- Chapter 13: 1-3
- Chapter 13: 23 ff
- Chapter 13: 26 – did not Solomon sin regarding this very thing?

## **Psalm 119**

- Longest Psalm in the bible, 176 Verses.
- Believed by scholars to have been written after the exile and return to Jerusalem.