

BOOK NINE



A.D. CHRONICLES®

ninth
witness



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Carol Stream, Illinois

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Ninth Witness

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A.D. Chronicles series designed by Rule 29, www.rule29.com

Interior designed by Dean H. Renninger

Edited by Ramona Cramer Tucker

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Thoene, Bodie, date.

Ninth witness / Bodie & Brock Thoene.

p. cm. — (A.D. chronicles ; bk. 9)

ISBN 978-0-8423-7531-3 (hc)

ISBN 978-0-8423-7532-0 (sc)

1. Jesus Christ—Fiction. 2. Bible. N.T.—History of Biblical events—fiction. I. Thoene, Brock, date. II. Title.

PS3570.H46N56 2008

813'.54—dc22

2008020072

Printed in the United States of America

15 14 13 12 11 10 09
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*This story is dedicated to our dear friends,
fellow writers, and prayer partners of YWAM,
especially in Kona and Harpendon!
Trusting ever in the promises of Joshua 1:5-9!*

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

LUKE 19:9-10

Prologue

The courtyard of Zachai the Publican was quiet now as guests wandered off to find sleeping pallets beneath the shelter of the portico. Zachai sighed with contentment. Forgiven, fixed in his resolve to make restitution, eager to begin atoning for his sins against others, the once-most-hated man in Judea sat on the broad railing of the fountain. He leaned his back against a stone lion and began to make a mental list of what he must repay: a confiscated vineyard that had to be restored to its rightful owner; a slave, sold to satisfy a debt, who must be redeemed and set free . . . so many others.

Zachai was determined to fulfill his pledge to right every wrong he had done.

Dawn was only hours away. How dramatically Zachai's life had changed between yesterday's first light and now. Was it only yesterday the despised tax collector of Jericho had climbed the sukomore fig tree in order to catch a glimpse of the passing Prophet from Nazareth? Zachai had caught much more than he had bargained for. Yeshua had passed the synagogue, then stopped beneath the tree. Looking

up, He had called Zachai by name: “Come down! I’m coming to your house today!”¹

And so Yeshua had shocked and angered the religious rulers of the city by entering the home of a publican. But Zachai’s heart had been transformed from darkness to light, from sorrow to joy, from disgrace to honor.

Zachai felt truly happy for the first time in his life. From his perch he watched as his servants cleaned up the wreckage of the banquet. Knots of hangers-on spoke in quiet tones as they clustered round the bases of the dimming torches. Three of Yeshua’s talmidim faced their Master in a half circle. They seemed to be arguing some point while Yeshua studied them with an amused expression.

It was late—well into the third watch. Most of Jericho slept now. In the shadow of Jericho’s ancient sukomore fig tree a trio of Jerusalem’s elite Pharisee sect, cloaked, as if in disguise, waited to speak with Yeshua. Had they come to the home of Zachai the Publican after the banquet in order to entrap the great Rabbi? Would they use Yeshua’s presence in the home of the infamous Zachai to discredit Him?

Nakdimon ben Gurion, bull-like in physique but known for his acts of mercy, was the youngest member of the ruling council in Jerusalem.

Nakdimon’s uncle Gamaliel, of late middle age, was an aristocratic lawyer and member of the Sanhedrin. In his youth, Gamaliel bar Simeon had studied Torah under the great Rabbi Hillel.

The third man Zachai recognized immediately. The sharp, angular profile of the wealthy youthful merchant, Joseph of Arimathea, was familiar to the tax collector.

Had these Jewish rulers supped at the banquet Zachai held for Yeshua, among the other followers and sinners? Zachai wondered. Had they been somewhere at the long tables with the other guests all evening long? Or were they latecomers, bribing Zachai’s gatekeeper for entrance and only now seeking audience with Yeshua?

In the flickering light of the torches Zachai could scarcely believe his eyes. Rabbinic law declared that if a Pharisee entered the gates of a publican’s house he would become unclean. Yet for this meeting with Yeshua they had come by night into defilement.

Zachai smiled ruefully at what deeds could be accomplished by night. “Ah, well. Don’t hold it against them, God. They’re only in my

garden. Not technically beneath my roof, eh? The branches of the fig tree are the roof over their heads.”

Minutes passed until Yeshua finished hearing the argument between His talmidim. The Master replied with a few softly spoken phrases. At His answer His followers sniffed and shuffled and, looking everywhere but into His face, sheepishly wandered off to find a bed.

Only then did the three rulers of Israel dare step out of the shadows for a word with the Rabbi from Nazareth. Once again, as He had with His talmidim, Yeshua listened intently to their words as they questioned Him.

Zachai strained to hear the exchange, but the splash of water in the fountain masked Yeshua’s words.

Nakdimon gestured toward the gate and shook his head.

Gamaliel seemed to agree with whatever his nephew said.

Zachai overheard Joseph of Arimathea speak two words clearly: “Danger . . . Yerushalayim.”

Zachai leaned forward, hoping to catch the full implication of Joseph’s warning.

Yeshua nodded, thanking them for coming but gently refusing the advice of the esteemed counselors. “Passover . . . my Father’s business . . .”

A man’s voice behind Zachai spoke bitterly. “You see, Mother, he will not be dissuaded from Yerushalayim.”

A woman answered with sad resignation. “Yes. It is Passover.”

Zachai cleared his throat and stood, alerting the speakers to his presence.

Peniel, the man born blind, now sighted and among Yeshua’s followers, raised his hand in greeting and approached the fountain with Yeshua’s younger brother and His mother. Peniel saluted Zachai. “Shalom be with you.”

“And also with you.” Zachai held his hands palms up in greeting.

Yeshua’s mother added, “May the name of Zachai of Jericho be blessed for his kindness to my son and all of us. May Zachai have peace at his going out and coming in.”

Yeshua’s younger brother, a short, swarthy man in his late twenties, scowled at Zachai as if he were an intruder instead of master of the estate. “All your household is sleeping.”

“There is a time to sleep. I will sleep after I awaken from my dream.”

Zachai motioned for the trio to sit beside him. “Sit. Sit, please.” And then, “I was making certain I would never forget . . . the Son of David holding audience beneath my fig tree. The honor of such a night, eh? And never before have the walls of this house enclosed members of the Sanhedrin.”

Peniel, following Zachai’s gaze to the three rulers, closed his eyes and appeared to listen to their voices. “My ears see them well. Those three? Gamaliel, who is counted a wise man. And his nephew, Nakdimon ben Gurion, who is a good man. Being a good man he is also counted as wise. And Joseph of Arimathea, who is a rich man. Wealth makes him also good and wise by the standards of the world. I would know their voices anywhere. I’ve heard them discuss the Law often as I sat at Nicanor Gate and begged. Those three are as upright as that fig tree, with roots planted deep in the righteousness of Torah.”

Zachai inhaled deeply. “Until today I would have argued that Righteousness could not enter the gates of a publican like myself. Not in my home.”

“We all heard what Yeshua said: ‘Today *Yeshua*, Salvation, has come to your home, Zachai,’” Peniel countered. “As for seeing a vision of three Pharisees planted there beneath your fig tree, the part that might be mistaken for a Pharisee is only their outward bark.”

Mary did not take her eyes from Yeshua. “They came to warn him. Those men from Yerushalayim.”

“The foolishness of this journey,” muttered Yeshua’s brother. “See, Mother? They are talking, but he isn’t listening. No one can tell him anything. And Peter, James, and John as well.”

Mary put a gentle hand on her son’s arm to silence him. “He told us once that he must be about his Father’s business. The shepherd . . . finding lost sheep.” She sighed. “You don’t remember. You were so young. We were there, you see. Passover in Yerushalayim. The bar mitzvah. Zachariah and Elisheba and young Yochanan. And then here . . . in Jericho. Inside the city gates . . . your father and I turned back to search.”

Suddenly energized by the possibility of learning more about Yeshua, Zachai urged Mary to tell the story. “When he was a boy?”

Mary fell silent for a moment. “Our first pilgrimage with him. Yerushalayim. The year Archelaus was banished.”

“The year of the census revolt,” Yeshua’s brother added sullenly.

Peniel hugged his lanky legs and studied Yeshua's face from a distance. "So we're going. No turning back, eh? Well then. Never again will we say: 'Next year in Yerushalayim.' It's this year."

Mary did not reply; neither did she look away.

Yeshua's brother grimaced as if pierced with a sudden pain. "The census revolt. Has he forgotten? See there, Mother. The look in his eye. He has set his face toward Yerushalayim . . . set it like flint."³

the middle east

FIRST CENTURY A.D.





PART I

And the child grew and became strong; He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.

LUKE 2:40

Jerusalem

FIRST CENTURY A.D.





CHAPTER

Sunset was quickly approaching. The appearance of three stars and the inability to distinguish white thread from black would usher in the Feast of Purim. It was the fourteenth of Adar in the 3767th year of Creation and one month before Passover.

Rabbi Mazzar, standing before the Scripture cupboard in the Nazareth synagogue, drew forth the scroll of Esther, the reading mandated for tonight's celebration. Tonight and tomorrow all Jews would celebrate the miraculous deliverance of the Jews of Persia from the clutches of the evil Haman. While reviewing the megillah of Esther, the congregation would revile Haman and extol the courage of the heroine and her uncle Mordechai.

It had been almost five hundred years since the events recorded in Esther had taken place. In the centuries following, empires had risen and fallen; Israel had been restored to greatness and had withered again.

The aged rabbi reflected on the passage of time. Esther's story had been read when the land of Israel was a province of Persia; when it had been annexed by Alexander the Great; when it had belonged to the Ptolemys of Egypt; when it had been under the thumb of the Seleucids of Syria; when it had enjoyed the brief sunlight of the Maccabees.

Tonight a Roman governor ruled the land. Though the empire had held sway over Judea for close to a hundred years, now, for the first time, Rome ruled Jewish affairs directly, instead of through a puppet king.

The rabbi stroked his wispy beard as he cast his mind back over the turmoil of more recent years. This year marked the eleventh anniversary of the death of King Herod. Interesting connection that: The remembrance of Esther's heroism and the death of Herod were two occasions when it was forbidden to fast or to mourn.

Herod's death, coming at the end of a string of murders, persecutions, and tortures, was acknowledged each year throughout Jewry. In the Galil they rejoiced quietly, for Antipas, son of the Butcher King, ruled here.

The rabbi shook his head sadly and peered out at the gathering darkness. Recent futile attempts to reestablish Jewish independence had failed miserably. After some initial success, including surprising the Roman garrison at Sepphoris, the Zealots had been defeated. Even now they were being hunted down. Like pinching out candle flames, the remaining pockets of Jewish resistance were being crushed.

All day today Roman legionaries, recruited from hereditary Jewish enemies like Idumeans and Samaritans, wielded hammers. They were not widening the Imperial highways or building another aqueduct or even repairing fortifications damaged in the revolt. They were crucifying the latest batch of captured rebels.

Though the executions were conducted along the main roads and not beside Nazareth's winding lane, the rhythmic thump of mallets, punctuated by anguished shrieks, echoed up and down the hillsides of the town.

The families would come to the synagogue tonight because it was their custom to do so. Mazzar would supervise the reading of Esther, because it was the right thing to do. What no one could instill in the occasion was any feeling of celebration. Where was the provision of the Almighty on this night? Where was there a Mordechai for this age? Where an Esther?



Herod Antipas reclined at a table amid a host of laughing, smiling guests. It was the Feast of Purim, which Antipas also celebrated as his

birthday. Because of the commandment to rejoice on the anniversary of the heroic deliverance of the Jews, some took the holiday as license for extreme drunkenness and revelry. It was, as one rabbi said, the most easily filled religious requirement for those who were never pious at any other time of year.

Antipas never required an excuse, religious or otherwise, for debauchery. Though he was only about thirty years of age, his face already showed the sagging jowls and furrowed ravages of excessive pleasure-seeking.

Moreover, this year's holiday and birthday offered him no reason for mirth, but even more excuse for drink. The celebration was taking place in the moldy, dark, drafty halls of Jerusalem's crumbling Hasmonean Palace. The Roman governor, Quirinius, had graciously allotted the old pile to Antipas as a Jerusalem residence, while the upstart, arrogant civil servant paraded around in the grand chambers and marble-lined corridors built by Antipas' father, Herod the Great.

There was no justice in the world—none at all.

After successfully conspiring with his brother Archelaus to eliminate their half brother Antipater as heir, Antipas had been shuttled off to be tetrarch of Galilee, as if that hick province would satisfy him.

Archelaus was an idiot, pompous and easily flattered. It had been Antipas' plan all along to let Archelaus prove how incompetent he was—that much of the plan had worked—and then be named in his place as the king of the Jews, like old Herod.

Antipas had even denounced Archelaus to Caesar, siding with the religious types he despised with the notion that they would support his claim to the throne.

Instead, now a Roman occupied the royal palace. . . . A Roman sat in the chair of state. . . . A Roman laid down the law in Judea as if there were no proper King of the Jews. And the religious establishment, from the newly appointed high priest on down, toadied to the Romans.

It was more than enough reason to be drunk.

The foolish rebellion in Antipas' tetrarchy had cemented the fact that he would not be named king, but Antipas blamed the uprising on Rome. If the Empire had only waited awhile before launching their stupid census. Rome's heavy-handed presence had sparked new calls for a mythical messiah and summoned forth the revolution that would usher in a glorious, resurgent Jewish kingdom.

Ha! Rome's presence had prompted a torrent of executions and condemned Antipas to celebrate his birthday slobbering into his cups. His wife, a princess of Nabatea, had long since abandoned her husband's side at dinner with no pretense of humility. She despised him when he was sober; she abhorred him when he was drunk.

So be it! She was only a temporary expedient until a better partnership presented itself.

Antipas shook his head ponderously and wine slopped out of the jeweled goblet. A servant attentively refilled it while studiously avoiding his master's drunken glare.

Just let anyone claim to be the Messiah—that Anointed One! Antipas would crush him utterly . . . and anyone who dared speak well of him or even the dream of him! If old Herod had been a suspicious, bloodthirsty tyrant, Antipas was fully prepared to out-Herod Herod!



The full moon rose in the constellation of The Virgin. Its bright gleam illuminated a colorless landscape. It created a ring in the sky from which all the other nearby lights, save The Lord of the Sabbath, were banished.

The reading of Esther proceeded as planned. Despite the unavoidably somber tone of the evening, the Scripture portions designed to be spoken in unison by the assembly and the roaring and hissing that accompanied each mention of the villain Haman's name were louder than Rabbi Mazzar had ever heard.

It took little pondering to realize the noise was not celebration but an earnest desire to drown out the screams of the crucified.

The square chamber of the synagogue was packed. Likewise, the Women's Gallery was full. No one wanted to be home alone tonight. If there was no joy in numbers, at least there was less terror because of being with all your friends and neighbors.

Other Purim feasts were given to drunkenness and revelry.

Not this night.

If the congregation was drunk with anything, it was apprehension.

The cantor chanted the words: "*And the king said, 'Hang him on that.'*"

Loud cheering, much applause, and the stamping of feet succeeded this decree.

“So they hanged Haman . . .”

Even louder applause, mixed with hisses, groans, and shouts of derision followed this use of the villain’s name.

“. . . on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordechai.”⁴

Looking around the congregation, Rabbi Mazzar saw strained hopefulness on each face: Would the Almighty ever intervene again in Jewish affairs? Haman’s plan to slaughter Jews had failed, yet just out of sight—around the bend, down the canyon—Jews were being slaughtered.

True, some of the crucified were brigands and bandits, but some were patriots, eager for Israel to live again.

The story had passed its climactic moment: Esther had triumphed; Haman was dealt with; the rest was a song of victory.

Mazzar’s eye lighted on the screen of the gallery where the women and children sat. What had attracted his attention was the face of his student Yeshua. It was pressed into a gap in the lattice, eager to hear every word.

The cantor arrived at another Scripture portion to be spoken in chorus, and the audience took up the refrain:

“Then Mordechai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.”⁵

Mazzar saw Yeshua’s face beaming as He chanted . . . as if He were viewing the story as a present reality—not an oft-repeated legend or a far-off promise, but a contemporary truth.

Why was that?

The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor.⁶

What a contrast this life of Yeshua was now compared to the gloomy expectations Rabbi Mazzar had when he’d first learned Yeshua’s mother, Mary, was pregnant while still only betrothed to Yosef. The dark thoughts and gossip of the villagers of Nazareth had been turned to light by Yeshua’s kindness as He was growing up. The sorrow of His grandparents had been transformed to gladness and joy in the presence of Yeshua’s laughter. The disgrace predicted for Mary had instead become honor through the virtue and wisdom of her son.

It seemed like few even remembered the questions that had swirled

around Yeshua's conception. The villagers simply accepted Him as one of them.

Mazzar turned to look out the window of the synagogue. A frown of surprise added to the wrinkles on his lined face. A shadow crept across the moon . . . but there were no clouds in the sky.

By the time the cantor sang, "*The Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them,*"⁷ others in the assembly had also noticed the celestial event.

It was impossible to miss: The eclipse was turning the moon to blood.

"Exactly what occurred just before the death of Herod eleven years ago," Mazzar murmured aloud.

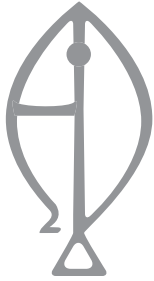
When the reading neared its completion, the chorus was loudest of all:

"For Mordechai the Jew was second in rank to King Ahasuerus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people."⁸

Another glance at his pupil brought yet another surprise to the rabbi. Now Yeshua's face looked grave, somber.

What was he failing to grasp that his student obviously perceived? Mazzar wondered.

What did the blood on the moon mean this year?



Digging Deeper into NINTH WITNESS

Dear Reader,

Have you ever wondered if God *really* cares about you? After all, if He did, wouldn't He intervene in your difficult circumstances? And what about all the evil in the world? Why do evil people seem to win, and honest folks get hurt? Sometimes life just doesn't seem fair. Justice is too long in coming.

If you've had these questions and thoughts, you're not alone.

In *Ninth Witness*, the Jews read the story of Esther, the queen who came into the limelight “for just such a time as this” (Esther 4:14). She and her uncle Mordechai were instrumental in the miraculous deliverance of the Jews of Persia from the clutches of the evil Haman, who wanted to annihilate them. (Interesting, isn't it, that throughout history other “Hamans” have arisen, including Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who collaborated with Adolf Hitler during World War II to try again to annihilate the Jews? Yet a remnant always remains.) But now, in the first century, it seems that God has forgotten the people He created. No Esther, no Mordechai, has arisen to right the present wrongs. Is there no justice? No hope?

Jude has seen far too much suffering in his young life.

No wonder he longs to turn back the clock to when he, his mama, his papa, and his sister were all a happy family . . . before the barbarity of Roman rule shattered their lives.

Zachai, the most hated man in Jericho, has had a wake-up call because of his meeting with Yeshua of Nazareth. Now is his time to take action. He must right the wrongs he has done . . . and face those he has terribly hurt. Yeshua has shown him mercy, but will anyone else?

People like Rabbi Mazzar, Zachariah, Nakdimon, and Gamaliel wait and watch for justice to be done in the land of Israel. They are convinced God will provide, but hope seems so distant at times. Yet God's promises of His watchful care are evident all throughout the Scriptures.

Yosef and Mary are convinced that the Almighty has sheltered them for a reason. What plan might be unfolding in their lives? in Yeshua's life?

And, dear reader, what plan might be unfolding in your life?

If you are feeling discouraged, here's a secret we want you to know: Facts and Truth are not one and the same. The fact is, life *is* difficult; at times it can be overwhelming. The Truth? God never leaves us nor forsakes us. That Truth you can count on, in the midst of hard facts.

Following are six studies. You may wish to delve into them on your own or share them with a friend or a discussion group. They are designed to take you deeper into the answers to these questions:

- How can you hang on in the midst of hard circumstances?
- What if . . . your life were different?
- Why is it crucial for you to identify what facts are, what Truth is, and to know the difference?
- Why is mercy—receiving it, giving it—such a high calling?
- Can you *really* believe God's promises in Scripture?
- What might God be doing in your life?

What are you longing for? searching for? Why not come home, as Jude did, to Yeshua? In *Ninth Witness*, may the promised Messiah come alive to you . . . in more brilliance than ever before.

I | WAITING FOR JUSTICE

There was no justice in the world—none at all.

—P. 5

Looking around the congregation, Rabbi Mazzar saw strained hopefulness on each face: Would the Almighty ever intervene again in Jewish affairs?

—P. 7

If you could wave a magic wand and fix two things about the world, what would you change and why?

Have you ever wondered if God would intervene in your life—or in the circumstances of those you love? If so, tell the story.

Many people know the story of Queen Esther in the Bible. It's a most satisfying story, filled with the excitement of a dastardly plot, a villain we can love to hate, and two unassuming heroes who rescue an entire nation. Even

better, the villain is not only stopped in his tracks, he receives a swift and just punishment . . . the kind most of us, if we're honest, would like to see visited upon our enemies.

When the evil Haman plots to annihilate the Jews, he has no idea that he will end up dying on the very gallows he's constructing for his enemy. And all because of the courage of a young queen, who could have died for daring to approach the king without him requesting her, and the determination of her uncle, Mordechai, who chose to *act* once he heard about the plot rather than wait for someone else to change the situation.

In *Ninth Witness*, it's been almost five hundred years since the events recording in Esther took place. Once again, evil reigns. . . .

READ

Tonight a Roman governor ruled the land. Though the empire had held sway over Judea for close to a hundred years, now, for the first time, Rome ruled Jewish affairs directly, instead of through a puppet king. . . .

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—P. 4

ASK

Imagine yourself in this scene—sitting in the synagogue on such a night, hearing the story of Esther and the rescue of the Jews while trying to close your ears to the shrieks of the masses of crucified Jews all around you. What thoughts would go through your mind?

What questions would you have for God in such circumstances?

READ

Justice is far from us. . . . We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.

—ISAIAH 59:9

ASK

When do you feel that justice is far from you? When have you desperately hoped to see light at the end of a long tunnel but seen only continued darkness?

What has happened in your life since that time of walking in deep shadows?

READ

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—P. 7

ASK

At what point in the story did Rabbi Mazzar see Yeshua's face? Why do you think this timing is important?

What do you think the sentence "The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor" could mean?

Do you tend to see the promises of Scripture as present realities or oft-repeated legends? Why? What in your life experience has led you to that conclusion?

What would change in your life if you began to see the ancient promises as contemporary truths?

READ

*The Lord looked and was displeased
that there was no justice.
He saw that there was no one,
He was appalled that there was no one to intervene;
so His own arm worked salvation for Him,
and His own righteousness sustained Him. . . .
According to what they have done,
so will He repay
wrath to His enemies
and retribution to his foes.*
—ISAIAH 59:15-18

ASK

What does this Scripture passage say about God's response to the lack of justice?

What will happen, in the long run, to evil people?

WONDER . . .

*Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the Lord rises upon you
and His glory appears over you.
Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*
—ISAIAH 60:1-3

How can you adjust your perspective as you wait for the Lord's justice?

Scripture References

- ¹ Luke 19:4-6
² Luke 19:9
³ Luke 9:51
⁴ Esth. 7:9-10
⁵ Esth. 8:15
⁶ Esth. 8:16
⁷ Esth. 9:5
⁸ Esth. 10:3
⁹ Isa. 59:3-4
¹⁰ Isa. 59:9
¹¹ Isa. 60:1-3
¹² Luke 2:35
¹³ Ps. 121:8
¹⁴ Ezek. 43:26
¹⁵ Ezek. 43:27
¹⁶ Jer. 31:15
¹⁷ Isa. 9:2
¹⁸ Isa. 9:1
¹⁹ Isa. 9:6
²⁰ Isa. 9:7
²¹ Isa. 11:1-3
²² Gen. 22:5
²³ See Luke 1:13-17.
²⁴ Lev. 1:1-2ff.
²⁵ Ps. 95:7-8
²⁶ Num 6:24-26
²⁷ Exod. 3:5
²⁸ Exod. 3:6; Matt. 22:32
²⁹ Ps. 121:1
³⁰ Ps. 121:2
³¹ Ps. 121:3
³² Ps. 121:4
³³ Ps. 121:8
³⁴ Ps. 131
³⁵ Ps. 129:1-2
³⁶ Ps. 129:3-4
³⁷ Ps. 129:5
³⁸ Ps. 129:8
³⁹ Ps. 134:1
⁴⁰ Ps. 130:1
⁴¹ Ps. 127:1
⁴² Ps. 134:2-3
⁴³ 1 Kings 9:3
⁴⁴ Isa. 53:4
⁴⁵ Ps. 19:1
⁴⁶ Zech. 9:9
⁴⁷ Ps. 125:1
⁴⁸ Ps. 125:2
⁴⁹ Ps. 125:4
⁵⁰ Ps. 122:1, 3-4
⁵¹ Ps. 126:1-3
⁵² Num. 19:1-2
⁵³ See Rom. 3
⁵⁴ Mal. 3:1
⁵⁵ Isa. 60:1
⁵⁶ See Isa. 25:8
⁵⁷ Ps. 91:12
⁵⁸ Deut. 18:15
⁵⁹ Ps. 113:1
⁶⁰ Ps. 114:1-2
⁶¹ Ps. 116:12-16
⁶² John 18:11
⁶³ Mal. 4:5-6
⁶⁴ See Matt. 10:29-31
⁶⁵ Isa. 53:3
⁶⁶ Luke 2:48-49
⁶⁷ Matt. 1:20
⁶⁸ Matt. 1:21, 23
⁶⁹ Luke 2:35
⁷⁰ Exod. 20:16
⁷¹ Lev. 19:18
⁷² Matt. 1:21
⁷³ Luke 2:48

Authors' Note

The following sources have been helpful in our research for this book.

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About the Authors

BODIE AND BROCK THOENE (pronounced *Tay-nee*) have written over 50 works of historical fiction. That these best sellers have sold more than 10 million copies and won eight ECPA Gold Medallion Awards affirms what millions of readers have already discovered—the Thoenes are not only master stylists but experts at capturing readers' minds and hearts.

In their timeless classic series about Israel (The Zion Chronicles, The Zion Covenant, and The Zion Legacy), the Thoenes' love for both story and research shines.

With *The Shiloh Legacy* and *Shiloh Autumn* (poignant portrayals of the American Depression), *The Galway Chronicles* (dramatic stories of the 1840s famine in Ireland), and the *Legends of the West* (gripping tales of adventure and danger in a land without law), the Thoenes have made their mark in modern history.

In the *A.D. Chronicles* they step seamlessly into the world of Jerusalem and Rome, in the days when Yeshua walked the earth and transformed lives with His touch.

Bodie began her writing career as a teen journalist for her local newspaper. Eventually her byline appeared in prestigious periodicals such as *U.S. News and World Report*, *The American West*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. She also worked for John Wayne's Batjac Productions (she's best known as author of *The Fall Guy*) and ABC Circle Films as a writer and researcher. John Wayne described her as "a writer with talent that

captures the people and the times!” She has degrees in journalism and communications.

Brock has often been described by Bodie as “an essential half of this writing team.” With degrees in both history and education, Brock has, in his role as researcher and story-line consultant, added the vital dimension of historical accuracy. Due to such careful research, the *Zion Covenant* and *Zion Chronicles* series are recognized by the American Library Association, as well as Zionist libraries around the world, as classic historical novels and are used to teach history in college classrooms.

Bodie and Brock have four grown children—Rachel, Jake, Luke, and Ellie—and seven grandchildren. Their children are carrying on the Thoene family talent as the next generation of writers, and Luke produces the Thoene audiobooks. Bodie and Brock divide their time between London and Nevada.

For more information visit:

www.thoenebooks.com

www.familyaudiolibrary.com